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A View of History from the Mountains: Daoist Hermitage in the Six Dynasties

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Abstract

During the Six Dynasties period, the cultural landscape of the mountains underwent a transformation. Most notable among these were the appearance of monasteries and Daoist temples as well as the system of immortals' grottos and estates that accompanied the latter. Because of this shift, mountains began to constitute a special religious and cultural space. Two factors contributed to this shift. The first was religious, specifically, the movement of Daoist and Buddhist practice into mountain retreats. The second was political, namely, how political power was shaped by new geopolitical configurations centered on the city of Jiankang (Nanjing). With these two factors at work, a new cultural form and spatial configuration emerged from the mountains that reflects the intimate relationship between the Six Dynasties politics, society, and culture.

Keywords

Buddhist monasteries – Daoist hermitage – mountains – ritual sacrifice – Six Dynasties

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What lies in the mountains?
Beyond the peak many white clouds

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Alone I enjoy the scene
With no means to relay it to you
—TAO HONGJING 陶弘景 [456-536]

How do we understand the historical changes that took place between the Han dynasty [202 BCE-220 CE] and the Tang dynasty [618-907]? The academic works of the past century include many nuanced investigations of this topic. Like the scenery on two sides of a path, history is always in process. The shifts that occur over history are born of gradual accumulation. Seen from a distance, these shifts seem more pronounced and obvious, as is the case when comparing the start of the third century to the end of the sixth century. The effects on politics and knowledge when paper replaced bamboo slips as the primary writing medium; the cultural transformation brought about by the intermingling of Han and non-Han peoples; the large-scale appearance of Buddhist temples, and the monasticization of Daoism during the Six Dynasties period [222-589]—these are all significant historical transformations.

How did the acts of Daoist and Buddhist reclusion lead to a changing cultural landscape of mountain ranges? If we take the first line of Tao Hongjing's evocative poem "What Lies in the Mountains" as a starting point of historiographical inquiry, the response offered in the second line, "Beyond the peaks many white clouds," is too simplistic. "The mountains" refers to a specific geographic space, where the settlements and sacrificial rituals offerings remain a part of the cultural landscape of many locales even today. The phenomenon of hermits seeking Daoist immortality dates to at least the Han dynasty. In the fourth century, with the rise of Buddhist temples and the monasticization of Daoism, certain mountains became sacred spaces where Daoist and Buddhist religious retreats were concentrated. Tao Hongjing's short poem was written during the transition from the Qi [479-502] to the Liang [502-557] dynasties, the very period when mountain monasteries and hermitages flourished. Thus, embedded in this poem's opening inquiry is the key to understanding the shifting cultural meaning of mountains.

How then, during the fourth century, did mountains come to take on a new cultural significance to form a unique religious space? Drawing on recent research conducted by the author, this paper endeavors to provide a comprehensive answer to this question.

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1 "The Residence of Local Deities" and the Regional Position of Jiangnan

Mountains originally referred to natural formations; only over time did they take on cultural meaning. Similarly, the religious belief in mountain deities, at first centered on nature, inevitably grew to take on the forms and characteristics of humanity. The *Classic of the Mountains and Seas* [*Shanhaijing* 山海經] records just such a progression in the case of mountain sacrifices. At key points in cultural history, mountains began to be used even in state sacrificial rites. The sacrifices of the Five Marchmounts [*wuyue* 五嶽] are a case in point.[1]

The Jiangnan 江南 region has a long tradition of mountain sacrifices. Mountain deities are mentioned many times in the second subsection of the "Classic of the Mountains: South" chapter in *The Classic of the Mountains and Seas*.[2] Many of these deities were venerated in the Kingdom of Chu [1042-223 BCE].[3] After the six kingdoms were united under Qin [221-207 BCE] rule, a new order of mountain sacrifice was established. Within this new order, marked by its favoring of the Guanzhong 關中 mountain ranges, the Jiangnan region incorporated Mount Kuaiji 會稽山 and Mount Xiang 湘山, two mountains related to the legends of the Yao 堯 [ca. 2377-2259 BCE] and Shun 舜 [ca. 2277-2178 BCE] emperors.[4] This may have been due to the influence of the Chu and Yue [2032-222 BCE] Kingdoms. Wang Mingke has argued that this forced geographical interpretation of the mythology of the sage kings reflects the political needs of lands on the margins of ancient China.[5] The so-called sacred mountains are cultural symbols backed by geopolitics. After the Chu and Yue Kingdoms fell to the Qin, the seat of political power moved to the north. As the Jiangnan region became more culturally and politically marginalized, the importance of their mountains also lessened.

It was during the Six Dynasties period that the Jiangnan region regained independent political power. Under the new geopolitical configuration centered

1 Tian Tian 田天, *Qinhan guojia jisi shigao* 秦漢國家祭祀史稿 [*History of Qin and Han State Sacrifices*] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2015), 297-327.

2 Yuan Ke 袁珂, *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* 山海經校注 [*Collation and Commentary on* The Classic of the Mountains and Seas] (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1993), 219.

3 Yang Hua 楊華, "Chudi shanshen yanjiu 楚地山神研究 [Research on Chudi Mountain Gods]," *Shilin* 史林 5 (2010).

4 Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 [*Records of the Grand Historian*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1982), 1371.

5 Wang Mingke 王明珂, *Huaxia bianyuan: lishi jiyi yu minzu rentong* 華夏邊緣：歷史記憶與民族認同 [*The Borders of the Hua and Xia: Historical Memory and Ethnic Identification*] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2006), 163-84.

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on Jiankang 建康, the sacrificial rites of the Jiangnan mountains also took on unique cultural characteristics. The sacrifices at Mount Guo 國山 held by Sun Hao 孫皓 [242-283] are a notable example. Unlike the combined *feng* and *shan* sacrifices [*fengshan jisi* 封禪祭祀] that were carried out at Mount Tai 泰山, the ceremony at Mount Guo began only with the *shan* 禪 sacrifice. The "Treatise on the *Feng* and *Shan* Sacrifices" [Fengshan shu 封禪書] chapter in the *Records of the Grand Historian* [*Shiji* 史記] cites Guan Zhong 管仲 to describe how, whereas the *feng* 封 sacrifice had historically taken place on Mount Tai, the location of the *shan* sacrifice was less fixed. This explanation establishes the authority of the Jiangnan government over the *shan* sacrifice without resolving the issue of the *feng* sacrifice. During the reign of Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 [464-549], a saying held that "the *feng* sacrifice should be held at Mount Kuaiji and the *shan* at Mount Guo." As this position received backlash from scholars, it ceased to be put in practice.[6]

The issue of how the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices were held reveals the incompatibility of Han political traditions and the localized politics of the Jiangnan region. One must keep in mind that the Five Marchmounts, as a cultural formation of the Qin to Han dynasties, supported a ritual order centered on the North. This interregional dissonance may account for why, from the time of the Wu Kingdom [222-280] through the Southern Dynasties [420-579], the Jiangnan political administration had little interest in holding sacrifices at the Five Marchmounts. In contrast, they held the worship of Jiang Ziwen 蔣子文, the so-called God of Bell Mountain [*zhongshan* 鍾山], in high regard.[7] The veneration of Jiang Ziwen's divinity reflects the importance placed by the Jiankang administration on guardian deities as well as "the residence of local deities" [*tudi suozai* 土地所在].[8] The inclusion in the official sacrificial sites of small hills where local deities resided is a practice that can be traced to the Eastern Jin dynasty [317-420].

As the Jiangnan territory lay at the cultural margins during the Qin and Han dynasties and rarely appeared in mainstream historical narratives, the mountain deities of Jiangnan were not very well known. As political power was

6 Yao Silian 姚思廉, "Xu Mao zhuan 許懋傳 [Biography of Xu Mao]," in *Liang shu* 梁書 [*History of the Liang*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1973), 577.

7 For more on the worship of Jiang Ziwen, see Lin Fushi 林富士, "Zhongguo liuchao shiqi de jiangziwen xinyang 中國六朝時期的蔣子文信仰 [The Faith of Jiang Ziwen in the Six Dynasties]," in *Yiji chongbai yu shengzhe chongbai* 遺跡崇拜與聖者崇拜 [*Relic Worship and Saint Worship*], ed. Lin Fushi and Fu Feilan 傅飛嵐 [Franciscus Verellen] (Taibei: Yunchen wenhua gongsi, 2000).

8 Wei Zheng 魏征 et al., *Sui shu* 隋書 [*History of the Sui*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1973), 108.

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established in the region, this situation began to change. The attention that the Jiangnan local deities and their places of residence subsequently gained can be seen in their increased mention in written records. One clear example is the case of the God of Gong Ting [*gongting shen* 宫亭神] who was said to reside on the south-facing side of Mount Lu 廬山. After the Six Dynasties became established in the Jiangnan region, its territory included a major road connecting the capital city of Jiankang to the Lingnan 嶺南 region. Many stories of the Gong Ting deity were thus spread via this path and have even appeared in Buddhist narratives. It is likely that the Jiangnan deities existed long before this period, but no records of them are in the sources of the Qin and Han dynasties. Their fame during the Six Dynasties period is tied to the center of political administration relocating to the Jiangnan region.

The influence of local deities is also apparent in the Daoist pursuit of immortality. Ge Hong 葛洪 [283-343, alt. 283-363] once drew on the *Classic of Immortals* [*Xianjing* 仙經] to create a detailed list of mountains where one could "devote oneself to cultivation and creating the medicine of immortality."[9] In this work, entries on the Five Marchmounts are followed by those of other well-known mountains divided by district. Among these are the Taihang mountain 太行山 range as well as the Ba 巴 and Shu 蜀, Kuaiji, and Lingnan districts that border it. For Ge Hong, the sacred mountains of the central plains are better suited for religious retreats than those in the south. Only after the Yongjia Uprising 永嘉之亂 in 311, when "the mountains of the central plains became inaccessible," did those pursuing the Dao retreat to the mountains and islands of Kuaiji.[10]

This influence of local deities is even more pronounced in the organization of Grotto Heavens and Blessed Lands [*Dongtian fudi* 洞天福地]. The first systematic record of such places is the early Tang text *Chart of the Palaces and Bureaus of the Grotto Heavens and Blessed Lands* [*Tiandi gongfu tu* 天地宮府圖] of Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 [647-735].[11] Among the various districts covered, the sacred mountains of the Wu 吳 and Yue 越 district seem to hold a leading position in the Jiangnan area. Five of the Ten Greater Grotto Heavens [*Shida dongtian* 十大洞天] are within the Wu and Yue district. (Of the remaining five, one each is in the Lingnan and Shu districts, two are

9 Wang Ming 王明, "Jindan 金丹 [Golden Elixir]," in *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱樸子內篇校釋 [*Collation and Explication of the Inner Chapters of the* Baopuzi] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985), *juan* 4, 85.

10 Wang Ming, "Dengshe 登涉 [Climbing and Crossing]," in Baopuzi, *juan* 17, 306.

11 Zhang Junfang 張君房, ed., Li Yongsheng 李永晟, annot., "Dongtian fudi 洞天福地 [Grotto Heavens and Blessed Lands]," in *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 [*Seven Tablets in a Cloud Satchel*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2003), *juan* 27, 608-31.

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mythical and therefore their locations unknown, and one is in the north.) Of the Thirty-Six Lesser Grotto Heavens [*Xiao dongtian* 小洞天], twenty-five are spread out among the sacred mountains of the Jiangnan region, with thirteen in the Wu and Yue district. The Eastern Jin text the *Life of Lord Mao* [*Maojun zhuan* 茅君傳] also lists thirty-six Grotto Heavens, the first ten of which match the Ten Greater Grotto Heavens recorded by Sima Chengzhen. The materialization of heretofore imagined immortals' caves and mansions in the form of Grotto Heavens is a new development in Daoism that occurred in the Jiangnan region. Thus, the "residences of local deities" is an important link in the process in which the Jiangnan mountains gained sacred status.

The case of the sacrifices carried out by Sun Hao at Mount Guo and the spiritual pilgrimages of Daoist priests to the Jiangnan mountains share the same historical contingency: in the words of Ge Hong, "the mountains of the central plains became inaccessible." In other words, the Jiangnan region mountains were initially a replacement for the sacred mountains of the central plains. The logic of this shift is tied, of course, to the long period of Jiangnan's marginalization that preceded and reflects as well how deeply rooted the legitimacy of the central plains was in the cultural consciousness of that period. To overcome its marginalized identity and incorporate itself as a recognized part of the political administration made up of northern exiles was a challenge faced by the Jiangnan region in the period from the Eastern Jin to the Southern Dynasties. The veneration of Jiang Ziwen during national sacrifices, the widespread dissemination of legends concerning the God of Gong Ting within intellectual circles, and the establishment of Jiangnan centrality in Daoist practice via the Grotto Heavens system—these are all products of this background.

2 Changes in Religious Landscape and Its Spatial Configurations

The history of religious mountain reclusion begins long before the appearance of mountain monasteries and hermitages. Liu Xiang's 劉相 *Biographies of Exemplary Transcendents* [*Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳] records many cases in which Daoists ingested essences as part of immortality practices in the mountains.[12] The character *xian* for immortality can be written in two ways: 仙 and 遷. The *Explication of Terms* [*Shiming* 釋名] says the following: "仙 is equivalent to 遷,

12 Wang Shumin 王叔岷, *Liexianzhuan jiaojian* 列仙傳校箋 [*Collation and Annotation of the* Liexianzhuan] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2007), 109, 158.

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as in 'to move into the mountains' 遷入山中."[13] Another variant of the character 仚 is recorded in the *Explication of Written Characters* [*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字]. As its gloss explains, "仚 is a person atop a mountain."[14] Both lexicological sources, which date back to the Eastern Han [27-220], reveal the intimate relationship between immortality and the mountains.

Early Daoists pursuing immortality lived in caves, also called stone houses [*shishi* 石室], or some other modest abode. The emergence of Daoist hermitages [*daoguan* 道館] akin to Buddhist monasteries was a historical phenomenon of the fifth century.

Many aspects regarding the origins of Daoist hermitages are unclear. Chen Guofu was one of the first to trace their appearance to the caves where Daoists first resided while on retreat.[15] Later, Qing Xitai's 卿希泰 edited volume *History of Chinese Daoism* [*Zhongguo daojiao shi* 中國道教史] also mentions the relationship between the early Daoist movement known as the Way of the Five Pecks of Rice and the rise of Daoist hermitages.[16] Six Dynasties scholar Atsuko Tsuzuki approaches this question starting with the valences of the character *guan* 館 in *daoguan* 道館, noting the shifting meaning of the word from the context of a capital to that of the mountains. Following the Liu Song [420-479] dynasty, Daoist mountain retreats became a flourishing practice because of support from the imperial family, nobles, and officials. In this context, *guan* referred to institutes in the cities where Daoist recluses were recruited to transmit their knowledge. When people began to build similar institutes in the mountains, the place of religious retreat gradually shifted there.[17] The observations of these three scholars are key in understanding the origins of the Daoist mountain hermitage.

13 Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Shiming Shuzheng Bu* 釋名疏證補 [*Supplements to the Rectified Dictionary of Chinese Terms and Characters*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2008), 3:96.

14 Duan Yucai 段玉裁, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 [*Annotations on* Explication of Written Characters] (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2007), 672.

15 Chen Guofu 陳國符, *Daozang yuanliu kao* 道藏源流考 [*Studies on the Origin of the* Daoist Canon] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1963), 264-66.

16 Qing Xitai 卿希泰, ed., *Zhongguo daojiao shi* 中國道教史 [*History of Chinese Daoism*] (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1996), 1:552-66.

17 Tsuzuki Atsuko 都築晶子, "Rikuchō kohanki ni okeru dōkan no seiritsu—sanchū shūdo 六朝後半期における道館の成立——山中修道 [The Formation of Daoist Temples in the Latter Half of the Six Dynasties—Pursuing the Dao in the Mountains]," in *Oda Yoshihisa hakushi kanreki kinen tōyōshi ronshū* 小田義久博士還暦記念東洋史論集 [*Collection of Essays on the History of the Orient Commemorating the 60th Birthday of Dr. Yoshihisa Oda*] (Kyoto: Ryūkoku daigaku tōyō kenkyūkai, 1995).

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Another factor that affects our understanding of Daoist hermitages is how the residences of immortals were imagined. The first volume of the *Codes and Precepts for Worshipping the Dao According to the Three Caverns Scripture* [*Sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* 三洞豐道科戒營始], titled "Installing Observatories [Zhi guan pin 置觀品]," reads, "to build Daoist hermitages that emulate the immortals' mansions …, one requires the approval of the emperor, that officials build and repair, and for Daoist priests and priestesses to preside."[18] This passage reflects how Daoist hermitages and temples are modeled after the homes and halls of immortals. It also tells us that the construction of these buildings was supported by the government. An example of this phenomenon can be found in a case in which Xiao Luan 蕭鸞 [452-498], Emperor Ming 明帝 of the Qi 齊 dynasty, ordered a well-acquainted Daoist priest to construct the Jinting 金庭 hermitage at Mount Tongbai 桐柏山 on Mount Tiantai 天臺山, which was the domain of the immortal Wang Ziqiao 王子橋. Not only was the Jinting hermitage built by the decree and patronage of the imperial house of the Southern Qi, but it was also tied to the "immortal residence" of Wang Ziqiao.

The belief in the existence of immortal residences materialized in the form of immortals' caves and estates, called grotto heavens, in the mountains. This phenomenon can be traced back to at least the Eastern Jin. The Juqu 句曲 Grotto Heaven of Mount Mao 茅山 has been described thus: "the rooms are structurally compact" and "spirits come and go, deliberating on matters of life and death, much like officials of the mundane world."[19] The Juqu Grotto Heaven is part of a much larger system of immortal grottos and estates. According to the *Declarations of the Perfected* [*Zhen'gao* 真誥], the Azure Lad [*qingtong* 青童], Lord of the Paradise Realm [*fangzhu* 方諸], dwells on the islands of Kuaiji and regularly roams about Mount Mao in Jurong County as well as the many grotto heavens in Mount Tongbai on Mount Tiantai. Thus, a certain geographical logic regarding immortal residences was formed: "to Kuaiji, its islands; to the Wu and Yue, its grotto heavens." This division somewhat resembles the governing relationship between state and prefecture in the mundane

18 "Zhi guan pin 置觀品 [Installing Observatories]," in *Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* 洞玄靈寶三洞奉道科戒營始 [*The Dongxuan Lingbao Tradition's Codes and Precepts for Worshipping the Dao in Accordance with the Three Caverns Scripture*], in *Daozang* 道藏 [*Daoist Canon*] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988), 24:745.

19 Yoshikawa Tadao 吉川忠夫 and Mugitani Kunio 麥穀邦夫, ed., "Ji shen shu 稽神樞 [Investigation of the Spiritual Pivot]," in *Zhen'gao jiaozhu* 真誥校注 [*Punctuations and Annotations on the* Zhen'gao], trans. Zhu Yueli 朱越利 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2006), *juan* 11, 357.

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world. As this system was already in place during the Eastern Jin, it is heavily colored by Jiangnan culture.

Imaginations of immortals' caverns and estates also had an impact on how locations for Daoist mountain hermitages were decided upon. The hermitages were generally constructed where the entrance to immortals' residences were believed to be. For instance, the most important entryway to the Juqu Grotto Heaven was a large cavern on the south-facing part of Mount Mao. During the Southern Qi, Wang Wenqing 王文清 received an imperial decree to oversee the construction of the Chongyuan 崇元 hermitage at this location. The buildings were so closely concentrated that "there were over ten houses within a few *li*."[20] Some other important Southern Dynasties hermitages that were located near grotto heavens on Mount Tongbai include the Taiping 太平 hermitage built to commemorate Chu Baiyu 褚伯玉 [394-479], the Jinting hermitage where Emperor Ming of Qi prayed for blessings, and the Shan 山 hermitage of Xu Ze 徐則 [511-592]. These were all located on roads leading to the sacred grounds where mountain gods reside, demonstrating that the placement of Daoist hermitages beside grotto heavens was a common spatial configuration.

Like early Daoist mountain recluses, individual Buddhist monks who retreated to the mountain tended to live in caves. Monks who retreated to the mountains in groups faced a different set of concerns when it came to living and shelter. When selecting a location for their monastery, they considered what the group would need to maintain their everyday lives.

Buddhist monasteries appeared in the mountains long before Daoist hermitages did. As early as the Western Jin [265-316], one was located near the capital of Luoyang. Following the Yongjia Uprising, Buddhist monks moved southward in large numbers. With their arrival, mountain monasteries began to appear in Shan 剡 and Lushan Counties. While these mountain monasteries quickly developed in number, Buddhism had nothing resembling the Daoist imagination of immortal residences that might imbue the Jiangnan mountains with any particular sacredness. However, some monks drew parallels between the Jiangnan mountains and Vulture Peak [Qidujue 耆阇崛] in India based on shape and appearance.

Erich Zürcher considers the intimate relationship between mountains and monasteries a hallmark of Chinese Buddhism, which may have been influenced by stories of Daoist immortals.[21] The relationship between Daoist

20 Ibid., 356, 366.

21 Erich Zürcher 許理和, *Fojiao zhengfu Zhongguo* 佛教征服中國 [*The Buddhist Conquest of China*], trans. Li Silong 李四龍 et al. (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1998), 328-40.

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immortals and Buddhist mountain retreats is expressed even more pointedly in the original writings of Nanyue Huisi 南嶽慧思 [515-577]. Less canonical evidence can be found in the apocryphal *Scriptures of the Monk Shouluo* [*Shouluo biqiu jing* 首羅比丘經] of the late Northern Dynasties [386-581] or the epigraph tablet dedicated to Prince Gao Rui 高叡 of Zhao County that was inscribed and erected in 557. The fact that both mention the Moonlight Lad [*yueguang tongzi* 月光童子] in conjunction with Mount Tiantai could be due to the prominence of immortals' grottos and estates on Mount Tiantai.

The belief in mountain gods far predates the presence of Daoist recluses and Buddhist monks in the mountains. When different religions are concentrated in the same geographic space, problems arise regarding how they will interact. In texts from the Six Dynasties that mention confrontations between different faiths, religious conversion is not an uncommon theme. Often, these texts take the position that, as a religion originating elsewhere, Buddhism seems to be more accommodating of both Daoism and local folk religion. As any narrative in these texts will inevitably be written from the perspective of a specific religion, it is the work of the researcher to learn to distinguish between "actual history" and "recorded history." The general trend seemed to be that, whereas a single faith sometimes dominates a certain space in the mountains, cases of peaceful coexistence are more common.

The emergence of Daoist hermitages and, before that, Buddhist monasteries are signs that both religions were transitioning from the practice of severe, isolated self-cultivation to collective retreats centered on the monastery. Along with this process came the sanctification of mountain space via the conception of immortals' grottos and estates as well as the transformation of the religious landscape of the mountains brought about by the patronage of imperial households as well as gentry and officials. Some of the scenes that can be seen in this transformed landscape of the Jiangnan mountains range from the rites of sacrifice and worship to the many monasteries and temples dotting its woods.

3 The Dynamic Relationship between Mountains and the Surrounding Districts

Mountain shrines and monasteries have a shared characteristic: they establish a sacred space in the mountains. Where they differ is that shrines exist mainly according to the religious needs of the surrounding populace, whereas Buddhist monasteries and Daoist hermitages serve a dual purpose: one is as the place of retreat and cultivation for monks and priests; the other is to serve

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the religious needs of the surrounding populace much like the shrines. The exchange between those residing in the mountains and those in the surrounding areas ensures that life in the mountains is not an entirely isolated existence but an integral part of the history of its locale.

The practice of shrine sacrifices stretches far back in history. They are usually born out of an interdependent relationship with the natural environment and form a core part of the common people's daily life. The choice of location for these sacrificial rituals is related to the natural layout of the land.[22] For instance, many shrines are located along the lower reaches of the Xiang River 湘水. As the path of the river shifts or the water level changes, the shrines may rise or sink, resurface, or get washed away.[23] The same can be said of the Gongting shrine located on the banks of Boyang Lake 鄱陽湖 at the foot of Mount Lushan. These cases reflect the strong interaction between folk religion and natural environments.

Praying for rain during a drought was an important religious activity in premodern agricultural society. As the mountains were viewed as a place where clouds and rainwater were stimulated, mountain shrines became a site where both local government officials and common people prayed for rain. The religious affairs of the shrines were led by medium-incanters [*wuzhu* 巫祝], carried out according to the needs of the surrounding populace and sometimes attended by government officials. At times, the activities of the shrine might spread beyond the district, depending on the movement of local worshipers.

In earlier periods of mountain reclusion, Daoists were primarily concerned with attaining immortality through self-cultivation; even then, the activities in which they engaged—seeking the medicine of immortals, forging elixirs, and ingesting essences—all required them to interact with the surrounding areas, particularly the markets. When the residents of mountainous areas harvested medicinal plans or collect firewood in the mountains, they would also have contact with Daoists. By performing miracles, the Daoists attracted followers and built shrines for their use. To the general populace, the shrines to Daoist immortals built by these recluses differed little from the mountain deity shrines to which they regularly made offerings.

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22 Kan'ichi Nomoto 野本寛一, *Kami to shizen no keikanron: shinkō kankyō wo yomu* 神と自然の景觀論：信仰環境を読む [*A Theory on the Relationship between Nature and Divinity: Interpreting Religious Environments*] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2006), 49-179.

23 Wei Bin 魏斌, "Dongting guci kao—zhonggu xiangshui xiayou de cimiao jingguan 洞庭古祠考——中古湘水下遊的祠廟景觀 [The Ancient Shrines of Dongting: The Religious Landscape of the Lower Xiang River during the Medieval Period]," *Lishi renleixue xuekan* 歷史人類學學刊 10, no. 2 (2012).

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As patronage for Daoist collectives in the mountains increased, their relationship with the society of the surrounding districts as well as the imperial government intensified. This is clear if one considers a Daoist hermitage in Mount Mao during its most prosperous period from the era of the Qi to the Liang. The close ties it had with the imperial court as well as gentry and officials, the activities it shared with its patron-followers from the surrounding era were both characteristics that would come to define Daoist mountain hermitages. The text from a stone inscription recently discovered in Langzhou, Sichuan, on a "Mr. Wei of the Southern Qi" [*nanqi Wei xiansheng* 南齊隈先生] describes a Daoist priest named Wei Jing 隈靜 who both participated in the religious activities of and received patronage from the Langzhong district.[24]

In some ways, this Daoist patronage system was an extension of early Daoist mountain retreat; in terms of its organization and operations, however, it was vastly different from what came before. Aside from the age-old practice of self-cultivation, Daoists who were at the mountain hermitages were also obligated to perform "praying for happiness and exorcising calamity" [*cifu rangzai* 祠福禳災] rituals for their patrons and founders. Such worldly practice contributed to the gradual intensification of the ties between the religious activities of Daoists in the mountains and the religious beliefs of the surrounding populace. During a ceremonious gathering held annually at Mount Mao on the twenty-eighth of the third month, "officials and citizens gather in crowds. Carts number in hundreds and there are nearly four or five thousand people." They ascend the mountain and recite chants from the Daoist canon *Lingbao changzan* [靈寶唱讚].[25] Such a mass participation ritual differs completely from the reclusive self-cultivation activities that are aimed at achieving immortality.

Like the early Daoist mountain recluses, Buddhist monks who dwelled in mountain grottos went through a similar process of monasticization. Their daily needs for everyday sustenance led them to interact occasionally with villagers in nearby towns. They gradually attracted a following by performing miracles and began, soon afterward, to build monasteries. Both the surrounding populace's acceptance of Buddhism and their patronage were key to this process, and, consequently, Buddhism spread throughout the Jiangnan region. A great example of this progression is the story of the Buddhist monk Song Toutuo 嵩頭陀 [502-557], who wandered to the Wushang 烏傷 District, earned

24 Sun Qi 孫齊, "Nanqi Wei xiansheng ming yu nanchao daoguan de xingqi 南齊〈隗先生銘〉與南朝道館的興起 [An Inscription on Mr. Wei of Nanqi and the Rise of Daoist Temples during the Southern Dynasties]," in *Weijin nanbeichao suitang shi ziliao* 魏晉南北朝隋唐史資料 [*Sources on the History of the Wei, Jin, Nanbeichao, Sui, and Tang*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015).

25 Yoshikawa and Mugitani, "Ji shen shu," 364.

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the patronage of the populace by undergoing trials and performing miracles, and established many monasteries along the mountain ranges of the Jinqu 金衢 basin. His actions had a significant impact on the religious life of the Wushang locale.

Potential patrons of monasteries and hermitages in the mountains can be divided into three groups: believers among the populace of the surrounding areas, local authorities, and the imperial government. The degree of involvement that these parties had depended largely on the influence of the specific monastery or hermitage. The two earliest centers of monastic Buddhism in the Jiangnan mountains were the Shan County mountains and Mount Lushan, with nearby centers of local politics in Xunyang 尋陽 and Kuaiji, respectively. The fact that these units consisted of one "Buddhist mountain retreat [*fuojiao shanlin* 佛教山林]" and a "seat of local government [*quyu zhengzhi zhongxin* 區域政治中心]" may reflect the distance that remained between Buddhist monasteries and the imperial government during the Eastern Jin period.

This distance would gradually disappear after the era of Liu Song. At that time, two mountains located near Jiankang, Bell Mountain and Mount She 攝山, emerged as new centers of monastic Buddhism. The extent to which the monasteries of these mountains relied on the political power of Jiankang far exceeded that of the previously mentioned centers of monastic Buddhism at Mount Lushan and the mountains of Shan County. To begin with, the rise of Bell Mountain and Mount She could not be considered exclusively in terms of developments in monastic Buddhism; it must also be understood as part of the cultural rise of the peripheral territories as Jiankang extended its political power and resources from the capital toward the outskirts. In fact, many cases of similar dynamics were already occurring at the local level, where the resources gathered by provincial and county governments fed the development of Buddhist monasteries. However, the scale at which this happened in the capital city of Jiankang could not be compared.

The relationship between Daoist hermitages and the imperial government also began to shift around the same period. According to Ge Hong's writings, the Jiangnan mountains so suited to early Daoist mountain reclusion were rather widely dispersed, with the most concentrated area being the Kuaiji District. The same could be said of the geographical distribution of the ten earliest recorded grotto heavens. With the flourishing of Daoist hermitages, Mount Mao became more important. Not only was it an important center for Daoist mountain hermitages, but it also maintained intimate ties with the imperial court.

This phenomenon is worth examining further. It is a well-known fact that the transition from the Eastern Jin to the Liu Song period saw a concentration

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of imperial power that affected the governance of the Jiangnan region. As Hu Baoguo 胡寶國 has noted, political and cultural resources moved from Kuaiji to Jiankang and were consolidated during the Southern Dynasties period.[26] One cannot help but wonder if the center of monastic Buddhism flourished in the mountains surrounding Jiankang in part because of this political shift. If so, this implies that the rise of Buddhist and Daoist monastic presence in the Jiangnan region was at once a religious phenomenon and a matter of geopolitics. This may be easier to understand if we consider how, in an agricultural society, the concentration and distribution of resources was directed by those with political power. For religious organizations that relied on a system of patronage, the imperial government and local governing authorities are the most important contributors.

4 Monastic Writings and Cultural Space "in the Mountains"

As Buddhist monasteries and Daoist hermitages flourished, a sense of "in the mountains" as a specific cultural-geographic space was forged. This new space could mainly be defined as cultural and escapist. In the preface to *Travels to Famous Mountains* [*You mingshan zhi* 遊名山志], Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 [385-433] ponders the relationship between food and clothing, on the one hand, and between mountains and rivers, on the other. Xie points to the former as "that which provides for our lives" and the latter as "that which suits our temperaments." He reasons, "certainly, we cannot favor a space of fame and wealth over a land of peaceful capaciousness?"[27] The sense of remoteness that comes from residing alone in the mountains and being able to sidestep the frustrations of living among other people made the mountains a shared space for those who wished to engage in reclusive self-cultivation and those who wished to escape worldly concerns. In the mountains, it was possible to focus, instead, on the world of the self.

As Obi Koichi has pointed out, such narrative accounts of mountain roaming rarely mention the hardships of living in the mountains.[28] A Daoist

26 Hu Baoguo 胡寶國, "Cong kuaiji dao jiankang—jiangzuo shiren yu huangquan 從會稽到建康——江左士人與皇權 [From Kuaiji to Jiankang: The Nobles of Jiangzuo and Imperial Power]," *Wenshi* 文史 2 (2013).

27 Xu Jian 徐堅, *Chuxue ji* 初學記 [*Collection of Elementary Learning*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2004), 94.

28 Obi Kōichi 小尾郊一, *Zhongguo wenxue zhong suo biaoxian de ziran yu ziranguan—yi weijin nanbeichao wenxue wei zhongxin* 中國文學中所表現的自然與自然觀——以魏晉南北朝文學為中心 [*Nature and Perspectives on Nature Expressed in Chinese*

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living alone in the mountains must surely face challenges regarding the barest questions of survival. From this perspective, the flourishing of monasteries and hermitages relaxed the conditions of religious training, especially compared to the harsh environments of reclusion. In fact, vivid explications—like those that appear in the *Collation and Explication of the Inner Chapters of the* Baopuzi [*Baopuzi neipian* 抱樸子內篇]—of the many hardships of reclusive life and suggested methods for how to overcome them, appear less frequently after the monasticization of Daoism.[29] However, as previously stated, these less severe conditions also made Daoist practice more reliant on the power structures of mundane society.

Monasteries and hermitages in the mountains were a cultural collective built on the relationship between master, fellow disciples, and disciples who together engaged in the work of remembering, building, and passing on traditions to future generations. With intensified ties with secular centers of power, these mountain monasteries gradually established themselves as important centers of knowledge production. During the Six Dynasties period, these religious collectives generated many important source materials and written records. The cultural importance of the monasteries and hermitages is further cemented by the fact that the tablet inscriptions in their temples were often written by court officials or well-known literati. Such inscribed tablets, like many monasteries and hermitages, might also be considered a conferred construction.

The Six Dynasties saw a watershed in the production of source materials on mountains. Previously existing records on the mountains were mostly concerning sacrificial rites. This may have been due to an imperial decree to preserve the funeral literature and poetry that was issued around the period from the Eastern Jin to the Southern Dynasties. Generally, these were not abundant in either variety of format or volume.

The rise of monasteries and hermitages was a crucial factor contributing to the expanded scope and volume of writings on mountains and rivers. The religious nature of this influential written culture reflects intellectual trends in the Eastern Jin. For instance, in the late Eastern Jin period, the expression "to indulge to the fullest in roaming the mountains and rivers" [*jin shanshui zhi you* 盡山水之遊] was popular in intellectual circles. In the literary realm, a great amount of knowledge acquisition occurred surrounding the "waning of the way of *xuanxue* [learning the dark and mysterious Dao] and rise

Literature—with a Focus on Literature of the Wei, Jin, Nanbeichao Period], trans. Shao Yiping 邵毅平 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2014), 125-26.

29 Wang Ming, "Dengshe," 299-314.

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of the way of mountains and rivers."[30] The large quantity of mountain poetry produced is a hallmark of literature from the Eastern Jin to the Southern Dynasties period. At the same time, writings that offer detailed documentation and description of mountains became a cultural phenomenon. Literature that carried the theme of mountains and rivers was generally written by those of the gentry and officials class whose attitudes reflected the saying "fondness of the beauty of mountain and rivers scenery is shared by all."[31] Aside from their fondness for the mountains' beauty, they also had motivations that were tied to the much less discussed influence of increased Buddhist and Daoist presence in the mountains.

With the intensification of ties between monastic religion and seats of political power, it became common for members of the gentry and officials class to pay visits to the mountain monasteries and hermitages. "Fu-Style Poetry on Travels to Seven Mountain Temples" [*You qishansi fu* 遊七山寺賦], by Xiao Cha 蕭詧 [519-562], composed during the Datong era 大通 [527-529] of the reign of Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 [r. 502-549], documents a tour of seven mountain temples located south of the town of Kuaiji.[32] The monks of these temples, such as the Mount Tianzhu 天柱山 temple, who were visited by the literati connected to the ruling houses of the period. To begin with, many of the monasteries in the mountains were built by imperial decree or through the support of gentry and officials. It seemed that the "place of fame and wealth" and "place of peaceful capaciousness" were not separable. This is important context for understanding the relationship between the mountains and literary production during the Six Dynasties period.

30 For more on this, see Wang Yao 王瑤, "Xuanyan, shan, tianyuan 玄言·山·田園 [Arcane Words, Mountains, Fields and Gardens]," in *Zhonggu wenxueshi lunji* 中古文學史論集 [*Anthology of Discussions on the History of Medieval Literature*] (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1956); Obi, *Zhongguo wenxue zhong suo biaoxian de ziran yu ziranguan*, 120-36; David R. Knechtges 康達維, "Zhongguo zhonggu wenren de shanyue youguan—yi Xie Lingyun 'shanju fu' weizhu de taolun 中國中古文人的山嶽遊觀—以謝靈運‹山居賦›為主的討論 [Scenes from the Mountain Travels of Medieval Chinese Scholars: A Discussion of Xie Lingyun's '*fu* on Residing in the Mountains']," in *Youguan: zuowei shenti jiyi de zhonggu wenxue yu zongjiao* 遊觀:作為身體技藝的中古文學與宗教 [*Scenes from Travel: Medieval Literature and Religion as Embodied Art*], ed. Liu Yuanru 劉苑如 (Taipei: "Zhongyang yanjiu yuan" Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo 中央研究院中國文哲研究所, 2009).

31 Chen Tianfu 陳田夫, "Shizhuanbu san 史傳部三 [Section on Histories, Part 3]," in *Nanyue zongsheng ji* 南嶽總勝集 [*Collected Highlights of the Southern Peaks*], in *Da zheng zang* 大正藏 [*Taishō Canon*] (Taipei: Xin wen feng chuban gongsi, 1983), 51:1056.

32 Shi Daoxuan 釋道宣, "Shizhuanbu si 史傳部四 [Section on Histories, Part 4]," in *Guanghongming ji* 廣弘明集 [*Expanded Edition of the* Guanghongming ji], *Da zheng zang* (Taipei: Xinwen feng chuban gongsi, 1983), 52:338.

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Another important cultural phenomenon in early writings on mountains were records of individual mountains. Many of these records are no longer extant. A study of the untransmitted texts, however, reveals that the contents of these works include descriptions of the natural scenery, cultural relics, and myths. It is possible to garner information regarding the mountain's natural topography via the itinerary and descriptions of mountain dwellings. The writings on the relics and myths are also an important cultural inheritance. As mentioned earlier, Daoist mountain reclusion had been in practice long before the arrival of the first Buddhist monks in the mountains. The *Records of Mount Lushan* [*Lushan ji* 廬山記], while compiled by the Buddhist monk Hui Yuan 慧遠, has content regarding Daoist immortals. This makes the question of source materials for the mountain records even more fascinating.

Let us take the records of Mount Heng 衡山, also known as the Southern Marchmount, as an example. A careful comparison of the untransmitted text of the *Records of the Southern Marchmount* [*Nanyue ji* 南嶽記], compiled by Xu Lingqi 徐靈期, and textual markings on the chart of the true form of the Southern Marchmount reveals documentation of information regarding the grottos, caves, immortal medicines, and water sources associated with Daoist mountain activities. Perhaps the most detailed extant Six Dynasties record of a mountain is the record of the Mount Mao, which can be found in the "Investigating the Spiritual Pivot [Ji shen shu 稽神樞]" chapter in the *Zhen'gao*, also documents information related to Daoist practice. From there, one might conclude that the information found in the mountain records is drawn not just from the observations of mountain residents but also from surveys of the lands conducted by Daoist mountain recluses wandering by foot.[33]

The *Lushan ji* and *Nanyue ji*, some of the earliest records of individual mountains, drew on knowledge acquired through religious practice. The fact that the former was compiled by the Buddhist monk Hui Yuan and the latter was compiled by a Daoist priest of the Liu Song period emphasizes that this trend in writings on mountains corresponds to the rise of monasticization for both religions. Records of individual mountains that were composed later tended

33 Cao Wanru 曹婉如 and Zheng Xihuang 鄭錫煌, "Shilun daojiaode wuyue zhenxing tu 試論道教的五嶽真形圖 [An Initial Discussion of the *Charts of the True Form of the Five Marchmounts*]," *Ziran kexueshi yanjiu* 自然科學史研究 1 (1987); Zhang Xunliao 張勳燎, "Daojiao wuyue zhenxingtu he youguan liangzhong gudai tongjing cailiao de yanjiu 道教五嶽真形圖和有關兩種古代銅鏡材料的研究 [Studies on the Daoist *Charts of the True Form of the Five Marchmounts* and Two Related Sources on Ancient Bronze Mirrors]," *Nanfang minzu kaogu* 南方民族考古 3 (1991).

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to be attributed to members of the gentry and officials class. This parallels the trend of aristocrats and royals visiting and roaming the mountains.

The appearance of various forms of writing—inscribed tablets, biographies, poetry, and gazetteers—that gathered information on the mountains had a profound influence on the organization of knowledge on the medieval period. The *Encyclopedia of Arts and Letters* [*Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚], compiled during the early Tang dynasty, was one of the first encyclopedias in China to create a section on mountains. The section consists mostly of materials from the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties period. It might be said that the creation of this section was contingent upon the large-scale production and accumulation of source texts on mountains during the Six Dynasties period.

5 Six Dynasties Legacy from the History of the Mountains

This study began with an inquiry into the profound transformation that took place in the religious and cultural landscape of the mountains from the start of the third century to the end of the sixth century in the Jiangnan region of China. At the start of the third century, the cultural significance of the Jiangnan mountains mainly centered in the Xiang, Jiuyi 九嶷, and Kuaiji mountains, which had inherited some of the legacy of the sage kings. It also consisted of a few sites where minor sacrifices of varying scales were held. By the end of the sixth century, these minor sacrifices still existed but contained new elements. More importantly, in the mountains a system of Buddhist monasteries and Daoist hermitages grew, along with the immortals' grottos and estates that accompanied the latter. As this paper has argued, two main forces contributed to this transformation: the expansion of Buddhist and Daoist activities in the mountains and the new geopolitical configurations resulting from the centrality of Jiankang.

In the *Compendium of Administrative Law of the Six Divisions of the Tang Bureaucracy* [*Tang liudian* 唐六典], the article on the vice-director of the Ministry of Revenue [*Hubu langzhong yuanwaishi* 戶部郎中員外史] under the section on the Department of State Affairs [*Shangshu sheng* 尚書省] mentions many sacred mountains, with thirteen of them in the Jiangnan region. Of these, Mount Kuaiji was known for carrying on sacrifices to Yu the Great while the Bell and Wuyi 武夷 mountains were known for inheriting connections to folk religion. Apart from one case, the remaining mountains are all related to Buddhism and Daoism. The influences of the grotto heavens system on these mountains were most notable. The Wu and Yue District contains the greatest number of sites associated with the two religions. Further, the organization of

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these sites mirrors that of the Six Dynasties political administration, reflecting the strong influence Jiankang had on the culture of the Jiangnan region.[34]

Another point worth exploring is that, although both Daoism and Buddhism established a foothold in the Jiangnan region, the influence of Daoism was much greater. Additionally, the new forms that Daoist practice consequently took are rarely seen in the north.[35]

Compared with monastic Buddhism, Daoist mountain reclusion was a religious phenomenon that grew out of the native context of China and is considered part of the cultural traditions of the Han to Jin period. While existing scholarship on this period has tended to focus on imperial administration or the gentry and elites, folk traditions are also an important part of this history. For instance, the Shangqing 上清 school was a Daoist conception that originated in the north around the Wei to Jin period. Following the Yongjia Uprising, this style of Daoism moved to the Jiangnan area, where it further developed and matured while absorbing influences from the southern locales. The flourishing of the grotto heaven system as well as Daoist hermitages both find roots in these developments. In contrast, Daoism in the north preserved existing forms of mountain reclusion and did not develop an expansive grotto heaven or hermitage system. As Tang Zhangru 唐長孺 points out, following the Yongjia Uprising, styles of thought splintered into north and south: "the south placed importance on argumentation and inherited the mysticism [*xuanxue* 玄學] of the Wei to Jin periods; the north, having inherited the traditions of the Han period study of classics. They emphasized textual exegesis, with apocryphal scriptures mixed in."[36] Developments in Daoism during the Northern and Southern Dynasties roughly follow this progression; however, I would argue that the south did not merely inherit Daoist practice from the Wei

34 See He Dezhang 何德章, "Jiankang yu liuchao shidai jiangnan jingji quyu de bianqian 建康與六朝時代江南經濟區域的變遷 [Jiankang and Changes in the Economic District of the Jiangnan Region during the Six Dynasties]," in *Weijin nanbeichao shi conggao* 魏晉南北朝史叢稿 [*Collected Manuscripts on the History of the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties*] (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 2010), 125-36. From the Tang to the Song dynasties, the Five Marchmounts lost some of their status. Key Buddhist sites were scattered across the E 鄂, Xiang 湘, and Gan 贛 districts. In the case of Daoism, the Hengshan, Magu 麻姑, and Gezao 閣皂mountains rose to prominence. These changes are the results of geopolitical shifts.

35 See Sun Qi 孫齊, "Tangqian daoguan yanqiu 唐前道觀研究 [Studies of Pre-Tang Daoist Temples]," PhD dissertation, Shandong University, 2014, 207-21.

36 Tang Zhangru 唐長孺, *Weijin nanbeichao suitang shi sanlun* 魏晉南北朝隋唐史三論 [*Three Discussions on the History of the Wei, Jin, Nanbeichao, Sui, and Tang*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2011), 227.

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to Jin period, but further developed them in the Jiangnan area and, by doing so, created a new tradition that incorporated the local characteristics of the south.

From this perspective, the development of grotto heavens and Daoist hermitages may be one of the greatest historical legacies of the Six Dynasties mountain culture. After the fall of the Southern Chen [557-589], the source materials and knowledge that were part of this legacy continued to influence intellectual circles in the Sui [581-619] and Tang dynasties. Additionally, through the activities of Daoists of the Mount Mao sect, its practices of this legacy were brought to the north, where they continued to develop and grow.

In comparison, the monastic Buddhism in the Jiangnan did not have any particularly striking characteristics, though, in the period following the Yongjia Uprising, monks from the monasteries established around Shan County were heard to engage in "pure conversation" [*qingtan* 清談] and explications of [religious] principles. This is not very conspicuous when one considers that the monastic Buddhism in the northern mountains was known for its grottos. The assignment of Mount Wutai 五臺 as the sacred place of [the boddhisatva] Manjushri's awakening also bears mentioning as a phenomenon with a special place in the history of Buddhism in China.[37] Although many monasteries were spread throughout the Jiangnan region, curiously, the practice of attaching sacred meaning to a specific mountain did not develop.

The most notable aspect of the Buddhist monasteries of the Jiangnan mountains is its relationship to Daoist practice in the mountains. For one thing, they appeared concurrently with the formation of the system of Daoist grotto heavens. As Daoist hermitages flourished, the mountains became a shared space of religious practice, creating opportunities for interaction and mutual influence. One example of this discussed earlier is the impact that Daoist practices based on the perceived sacredness of the mountains had on Buddhism. From this perspective, the nuance of monastic faith in the Jiangnan mountains was perhaps more varied than that of the north. To gain a deeper understanding of how Buddhism interacted with local religions via confrontation, assimilation,

37 See Lin Yun-jo 林韻柔, "Wutaishan yu wenshu daochang—zhonggu fojiao shengshan xinyang de xingcheng yu fazhan 五臺山與文殊道場——中古佛教聖山信仰的形成與發展 [Mount Wutai as a Sacred Site: The Formation and Development of Buddhist Sacred Mountain Worship in the Medieval Period]," PhD dissertation, National Taiwan University, 2009, 29-62; Chen Jinhua 陳金華, "Dongya fojiao zhong de 'biandi qingjie'—lun shengdi ji zupu de jiangou 東亞佛教中的 "邊地情結"—論聖地及祖譜的建構 [The 'Borderland' Complex in East Asian Buddhism: on the Construction of Holy Places and Their Genealogies]," *Foxue yanjiu* 佛學研究 21 (2012). This kind of fixed association of a certain bodhisattva with a sacred place is a bit similar to treating certain grottos as the domain of certain Daoist immortals.

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and intermixing after coming to China, the Jiangnan monasteries can serve as a more representative case study.

As the monasticization of religions occurred during the Six Dynasties, the mountains became a new cultural space. As Allan Pred has argued, space is a product of human labor.

> *The historically contingent becoming of any place*, all that is seen as place and all that takes place within a given area, *is inseparable from the materially-continuous unfolding of the structuration process in that place* (and any other places with which it is economically, politically, or otherwise interdependent).[38]

In terms of how the Six Dynasties mountains took shape, its "structuration process" was a product of developments in Daoism and Buddhism and how those developments affected its scenes. The collectivization and monasticization of Daoism in the mountains were preceded by the emergence of Buddhist monasteries and, before that, mountain reclusion by lone Daoists who took shelter in caves and other modest abodes. Based on this sequence, one could say monasticization was a historical phenomenon that resulted from Buddhism's acclimating, adjusting, and assimilating to preexisting practices of religious mountain reclusion after being introduced to China.

Pred also points out, "as a place becomes under any given set of historical circumstances, power relations are at the heart of its social structure."[39] Although the period of monasticization "in the mountains" has specific cultural characteristics, it is not removed from power relations. Aside from how this might have been manifested in interpersonal and interfaith encounters, the patronage required for monastic life also absorbed the monasteries and hermitages of the mountains into the dynamics of secular politics and social power structures. While they were a "place of peaceful capaciousness," the mountains were concomitantly a place intimately connected to the Six Dynasties political history. Their meaning went beyond religious life; they were also a place where one could shed one's worldly identity, reform social ties, and reestablish social mobility. Zürcher and Tsuzuki have separately pointed out that the monasteries and hermitages eliminated the boundaries between

38 Allan Pred, "The Social Becomes the Spatial, the Spatial becomes the Social: Enclosures, Social Change and the Becoming of Places in the Swedish Province of Skane," in *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*, ed. Derek Gregory and John Urry (London: Macmillan, 1985), 339.

39 Ibid.

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various class identities, creating a new space for social activity.[40] In the religious spaces of the later Southern Dynasties periods, traces can be found of ostracized figures and families in the Jiangnan region. The specific cultural and geographical characteristics of the mountains allowed them to play an important role in the process of such social and cultural shifts. It is in this way that many insights into the Six Dynasties history can be found from the monasticization of Daoism and Buddhism in the Jiangnan mountains.

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40 See Zürcher, *Fojiao zhengfu Zhongguo*; Tsuzuki Atsuko 都築晶子, "Liuchao shidai de Jiangnan shehui yu daojiao 六朝時代的江南社會與道教 [Jiangnan Society and Daoism during the Six Dynasties]," in *Weijin nanbeichao shidai de jiben wenti* 魏晉南北朝時代的基本問題 [*Basic Problems Concerning the Period of the Wei-Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties*], ed. Tanigawa Michio 谷川道雄 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2009).

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Mount Longjiao's "Capital of Immortals" [龍角仙都]: Representation and Evolution of a Sacred Site from the Tang Dynasty

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Abstract

The Abbey Celebrating the Tang [*Qingtang guan* 慶唐觀], a Daoist temple on Mount Longjiao in southern Shanxi Province, played a special role in the religious history of China in the Tang dynasty. Because of the myth that Laozi himself emerged from this mountain during the war to found the Tang state, this abbey was closely linked to the political legitimation of the Tang. Even plants in this abbey were regarded as the harbingers of the fate of the state. The emperor Xuanzong erected a huge stele in the Abbey Celebrating the Tang, demonstrating the support enjoyed from the royal house. Images of the six emperors, from Tang Gaozu to Xuanzong, were also held in the abbey. After the collapse of the Tang dynasty in 907, the Abbey Celebrating the Tang lost its political, legitimizing privileges, but its connection with the local community continued to develop well into the Song, Liao, Jin, and later dynasties. The creation and transformation of the Abbey Celebrating the Tang not only show the political influence of popular religion in ancient medieval China but also provide an interesting case of how a Daoist temple grew in popularity and prestige after it lost favor with the state.

Keywords

Abbey Celebrating the Tang – Daoism temples – Mount Longjiao – sacred spaces – Tang dynasty

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In southern Shanxi Province, at the border between Fushan 浮山 and Jicheng 冀城 Counties in Linfen 臨汾 Prefecture, stands a twin-peak mountain that does not offer a particularly dramatic view, geographically speaking. However, the mountain played a significant role in the religious history of the Tang dynasty [618-907]. The rulers of the Tang dynasty originally referred to it as Mount Yangjiao 羊角山. Following a mythical series of apparitions of the Highest Lord Lao [*Taishang Laojun* 太上老君] at the outset of the Tang's state-building efforts, Mount Yangjiao was portrayed as a sacred site with a special "revolutionary and sacred" character. It remained closely connected to the political legitimacy of the Tang during the period of state foundation as well as to the subsequent rise and the eventual decline of the dynasty. Those circumstances led to the renaming of the Fushan County and Mount Yangjiao, which then became known as the Sacred Mountain County [*Shenshan xian* 神山縣] and Mount Longjiao 龍角山. Lord Lao's Temple, which had been erected at the dawn of the Tang dynasty, was renamed the Abbey Celebrating the Tang [*Qingtang guan* 慶唐觀] during the emperor Xuanzong's 玄宗 [685-762] reign (the ruins are in what is now the hamlet of Guanli 貫里村 in Dongzhang Township 東張鄉 in Fushan County). In addition to this, Xuanzong commissioned "'Abbey Celebrating the Tang' Inscriptions Recording the Sage" [*Qingtang guan ji sheng ming* 慶唐觀紀聖銘] to demonstrate the court's special commitment to the site. In the monastery itself, portraits of the "Six Sage Emperors" [*Liu sheng* 六聖] representing Tang rulers from Gaozu 高祖 [r. 618-635] to Xuanzong, were enshrined, making the monastery resemble Chang'an's 長安 Taiqing Palace 太清宮 by having it serve as both a Daoist temple and an imperial ancestral shrine. During the period of the Song [960-1279], Jin [1115-1234], and Yuan [1271-1368] dynasties, the Abbey Celebrating the Tang was renamed the Tiansheng Monastery and then the Tiansheng Palace 天聖觀／宮. After the connection it had enjoyed with the Tang dynasty's political legitimacy ultimately vanished, it nonetheless remained intimately woven into the social fabric of southern Shanxi. It went on to become a religious center with local importance and the scent of incense pervaded it continuously until the period of the Republic of China.

Although many historical works on Daoism touch upon the Tang dynasty's founding myth of Mount Yangjiao, a systematic study of the evolution and transformations experienced by the Abbey Celebrating the Tang has not been accomplished yet. In a 2003 article about the Tang dynasty's graphic representations of emperors, I paid some attention to the monastery,[1] but did not

1 The reader may find it useful to refer to my article on the subject: Lei Wen 雷聞, "Lun Tangdai huangdi de tuxiang yu jisi 論唐代皇帝的圖像與祭祀 [A Discussion of the Relation

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discuss its history in depth. In 2006, Wang Hanzhang 王翰章 conducted a preliminary sorting of the extant artifacts found in the monastery's ruins.[2] More recently, organizations and scholars in Fushan County have been producing a series of textbooks to give the site publicity and to promote the tourism industry and the development of local cultural initiatives. Unfortunately, they are not sufficiently supported by scientific evidence. The present article attempts to use material from stone inscriptions to explore the making of a sacred site with no previous ties to the Daoist tradition, as well as its development and the transformations it underwent over the ages.

1 A Brief Summary of Relevant Material

The earliest records available of Mount Longjiao and the Abbey Celebrating the Tang are found in the document "The Records of the Jin Prefecture Mount Yangjiao Abbey Celebrating the Tang" [*Jinzhou yangjiaoshan qingtangguan ji* 晉州羊角山慶唐觀記], which was penned by the Daoist priest Li Yongde 李用德 during the Tang dynasty. Although even now it remains lost, its existence was recorded in "Classes of Immortals" [*Shenxian lei* 神仙類], in "Bibliographical Treatise on Arts and Literature" [*Yiwen zhi* 藝文志], the fourth section of the *History of the Song Dynasty* [*Songshi* 宋史].[3] Works such as *The Comprehensive Records* [*Tong zhi* 通志] and *The Library Catalogue of the Suichu Hall* [*Suichu tang shumu* 遂初堂書目] also mention the document and even though its name and its author are written in a slightly different manner in them, it is possible to confirm that they refer to the same document.[4] No

between Graphic Representations of the Tang Emperors and Ancestor Worshiping]," in *Tang yanjiu* 唐研究 [*Tang Dynasty Studies*], ed. Rong Xinjiang 榮新江 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2003), 261-82. See also my book: Lei Wen 雷聞, *Jiaomiao zhiwai: Sui Tang guojia jisi yu zongjiao* 郊廟之外——隋唐國家祭祀與宗教 [*Beyond the Temple: Ancestor Worshiping and Religion in the Sui and Tang States*] (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 2009), 112-13.

2 Wang Hanzhang 王翰章, "Yi pi yanjiu daojiao wenhua de zhengui wenwu: jianlun Tang wangchao zunzu chongdao wenti 一批研究道教文化的珍貴文物——兼論唐王朝尊祖崇道問題 [Studies on Precious Daoist Cultural Artefacts and a Discussion on the Issue of the Tang Dynasty's Ancestor Worship in Relation to Daoist Rites]," *Wen bo* 文博 [*Relics and Museology*] 3 (2006).

3 "Yiwen zhi 藝文志 [The Bibliographical Treatise on Arts and Literature]," in *Song shi* 宋史 [*History of the Song Dynasty*], ed. Tuotuo 脫脫 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977). In the original text, *Qing Tang guan* 慶唐觀 [Abbey Celebrating the Tang] erroneously appears as *Qing li guan* 慶曆觀.

4 Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 writes in the fifth "Record on the Daoist School" [*Daojia: ji* 道家·記], which appears on the sixty-seventh roll of *The Comprehensive Records* [*Tong zhi* 通志] in the section titled "A Brief Account of Arts and Literature" [*Yiwen lüe* 藝文略]: "'The Records of

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further information is available about this document and its author, and therefore we can only attempt to infer more conclusions from the title. As discussed below, the Abbey Celebrating the Tang appellation dates to the sixteenth year of the Kaiyuan era 開元 [713-741] of the Xuanzong emperor and the renaming of Mount Yangjiao as Mount Longjiao occurred the following year. If we assume that what is recorded in the *History of the Song Dynasty* and in *The Comprehensive Records* has no errors, then it is likely that this document was composed between the sixteenth and seventeenth year of the Kaiyuan era. Its content probably relates to the multiple apparitions of the Highest Lord Lao, which are thought to have occurred during the emergence of the Tang dynasty as well as with the favors bestowed on the monastery by the imperial court. Li Yongde (or Li Yongneng 李用能) was perhaps a Daoist priest at the Abbey Celebrating the Tang, and this text appeared to mark a critical moment, namely, the commission by the Xuanzong emperor of the engraving of a stele for the monastery, in the sixteenth year of the Kaiyuan era. Because this document has been lost, it is impossible to offer a more detailed explanation on this matter. For now, the most useful data come from stone inscriptions, such as the ones listed below.

1. "The Great Tang Dynasty's Inscriptions of Mount Longjiao's Abbey Celebrating the Tang Recording the Sages" [*Datang longjiao shan qingtang guan jisheng zhi ming* 大唐龍角山慶唐觀紀聖之銘] (referred to below as "The Inscriptions Recording the Sages"). The stele was erected during the ninth month of the seventeenth year of the Kaiyuan era and was commissioned by Emperor Xuanzong himself.

   At present, this is the earliest and the most valuable material data available concerning the Abbey Celebrating the Tang, and it is still standing among the monastery's ruins. The main body and top section form a 269-centimeter-tall stele that is 103 centimeters wide and 32 centimeters deep. *Bixi* 贔屭, the stele-carrying tortoise on which it stands, is 73 centimeters high, and its body is 197 centimeters long and 109 centimeters

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the Jin Prefecture Mount Yangjiao Abbey Celebrating the Tang' [*Jinzhou Yangjiao shan Qingtang guan ji* 晉州羊角山慶唐觀記] was penned by the Daoist priest Li Yongneng 李用能." The "blessings" [*qing* 慶] part has obviously been omitted from the document's name. See Wang Shumin's 王樹民 work for a punctuated proofread version of the Classical Chinese: Zheng Qiao 鄭樵, *Tong zhi er shi lüe* 通志二十略 [*The Comprehensive Records' Twenty Monographs*], ed. Wang Shumin 王樹民 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 1616. See also the geography section [*Dili lei* 地理類] of *The Library Catalogue of the Suichu Hall,* in which are included the "Records on Mount Yangjiao" [*Yangjiao shan ji* 羊角山記]: You Mao 尤袤, "Suichu tang shumu 遂初堂書目 [The Library Catalogue of the Suichu Hall]," ed. Wang Yunwu 王雲五 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1935), 32:15.

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wide.[5] If we add the pedestal, the entire stele is nearly 3.5 meters tall. It no doubt is a work of impressive scale, especially for something that was built in the early days of the Tang dynasty.

On the stele's top section the shape of a jade tablet is preserved, on which appear the six following characters in seal script: "Mount Longiao's Inscriptions Recording the Sages" [*Longjiao shan ji sheng ming* 龍角山紀聖銘]. The stele's front narrates the many times that Lord Lao was miraculously manifested as well as the different auspicious omens witnessed at the monastery during the Kaiyuan era. The back of the stele was engraved by Lü Xiang 呂向, and at the top of the list of characters figure the crown prince and other various princes and chancellors, among other great names from eminent members of the imperial court. However, while the Southern Song dynasty's *Assorted Compilation of Precious Inscriptions* [*Baoke leibian* 寶刻類編] is the earliest work to mention the stele, it does not record the engraving's text.[6] *The Complete Prose Works of the Tang Dynasty* [*Quan tang wen* 全唐文] mentions the stele but not the characters engraved on the back.[7] Yet, in 1988, the stele's engravings reappeared in the *Brief Introduction to Daoist Metal and Stone Inscriptions* [*Daojia jinshi lüe* 道家金石略], based on the rubbings taken from the Hall of Arts and Wind [*Yifeng Tang* 藝風堂] as well as on the "Supplement to the Metal and Stone Inscriptions of the Baqiong Studio" [Baqiong shi jinshi buzheng 八瓊室金石補正] and the *Edited Collection of Stone Inscriptions from the Area East of the Taihang Mountains* [*Shanyou shike congbian* 山右石刻叢編].[8] In 1997, the Shanxi Archeological Bureau for the first time published the rubbings from the stele in *The Steles of Shanxi* [*Shanxi beijie* 山西碑碣].[9] Moreover, the *Complete Collection of the Three Jin States' Stone Inscriptions: The Fushan County's (Linfen Prefecture) Scrolls* [*Sanjin shike daquan: linfen shi fushan xian juan* 三晉石刻大全·臨汾市浮山縣卷] also provides rubbings as well as a transcription of the engraved

5 The Shanxi Archeological Research Institute, comp., *Shanxi beijie* 山西碑碣 [*The Shanxi Stone Tablets*] (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1997), 90.

6 "Baoke leibian 寶刻類編 [Assorted Compilation of Precious Inscriptions]," in *Shike shiliao xinbian* 石刻史料新編 [*A New Compilation of Historical Material Related to Stone Inscriptions*] (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1977), vol. 1, book 24, roll 1, 18408.

7 Dong Gao 董誥, comp., *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 [*The Complete Prose Works of the Tang Dynasty*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), roll 41, 451.

8 Chen Yuan 陳垣, comp., Chen Zhichao 陳智超 and Zeng Qingying 曾慶瑛, ed. and supp., *Daojia jinshi lüe* 道家金石略 [*A Brief Introduction to Daoist Metal and Stone Inscriptions*] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988), 111-14.

9 Shanxi Archeological Research Institute, *Shanxi beijie*, 90-95.

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characters.[10] In citing the stele, the present article, without exception, compare it to the *Brief Introduction to Daoist Metal and Stone Inscriptions*, in addition to checking some sections of the characters and punctuation against the plates, to avoid any kind of speculation.

2. "The Golden Register's Ode to Purgation for the Tang Dynasty's Temple of the Great Sage Ancestor and Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin [Laozi] in Mount Longjiao's Abbey Celebrating the Tang [Pingyang Prefecture]" [*Datang pingyang jun longjiao shan qing tang guan da shengzu xuanyuan huangdi gong jinlu zhai song* 大唐平陽郡龍角山慶唐觀大聖祖玄元皇帝宮金籙齋頌] (referred to below as "The Golden Register's Ode to Purgation"). It was erected on the fifteenth day of the tenth month of the second year of the Tianbao era 天寶 [742-756]. The right-hand side remedies omissions by Cui Mingyun 崔明允 and is the work of the Academy of Scholarly Worthies' [*Jixian yuan* 集賢院] Edict Attendant Shi Weize 史惟則. The stele records the great event of the Xuanzong emperor issuing an imperial edict, during the twenty-fifth year of the Kaiyuan era, regarding the holding of the Golden Register's ritual purgation. The full text appears in *The Finest Blossoms in the Garden of Literature* [*Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華], which, however, erroneously attributes the text to Cui Yuanming 崔元明.[11] Studies on epigraphy from the Song dynasty onward also include, for the most majority, remarks on this particular stele. *A Brief Introduction to Daoist Metal and Stone Inscriptions*, for its part, provides a transcription of the text based on the rubbings taken from the Hall of Arts and Literature and *A Selected Compilation of Metal and Stone Inscriptions* [*Jinshi cuibian* 金石萃編].[12] So does *The Complete Collection of the Three Jin States' Stone Inscriptions: Fushan County's* [*Linfen Prefecture*] *Scrolls*,[13] even though the photographs that appear in it are disappointingly not clear enough for us to distinguish the text. Based on what the printing plates can tell us, this stele was inherited from a period after the Tang dynasty because, in the stele's inscriptions, the appellation of "Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin"

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10 Zhang Jinke 張金科, Yao Jinyu 姚錦玉, Xing Aiqin 邢愛勤, comp., *San Jin shike daquan: Linfen shi Fushan xian juan* 三晉石刻大全·臨汾市浮山縣卷 [*The Complete Collection of the Three Jin States' Stone Inscriptions: Fushan County's* (*Linfen Prefecture*) *Rolls*] (Taiyuan: Sanjin chubanshe, 2012), 18-23.

11 Li Fang 李昉, Xu Xuan 徐鉉, Song Bai 宋白 and Su Yijian 蘇易簡, comp., *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 [*The Finest Blossoms in the Garden of Literature*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), roll 779, 4109.

12 Chen Yuan, *A Brief Introduction*, 137.

13 Zhang Jinke, *The Complete Collection*, 18-23.

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[*Xuanyuan huangdi* 玄元皇帝], which designates Laozi, was avoided as taboo and replaced by the "Most Sovereign Emperor" [*Yuanyuan huangdi* 元元皇帝].

At present, an incomplete piece of a Tang stele has been preserved in the old site of the Abbey Celebrating the Tang. Based on the inscriptions, only seven lines remain, and the beginning and the end of the text are fragmentary. The plates appear in *The Abbey Celebrating the Tang*, published by the editorial board of the Fushan County's Abbey Celebrating the Tang. When we compare these incomplete engravings to the rubbings in *The Complete Collection of the Three Jin States' Stone Inscriptions*, we note that not only does the rubbings' calligraphic style seem insubstantial but also that the format has also been altered to some degree, which makes it obvious that it had already been recarved by later generations. The incomplete Tang stele found among the monastery ruins enables us to glimpse the original stele's elegant style. We refer to these epigraphs, after they were checked against the text in *The Finest Blossoms in the Garden of Literature*, and their spelling and punctuation have been partially revised based on the two plates.

3. "Li Huan's Epigraphs of the Abbey Celebrating the Tang Temple of Paying One's Respects to the Heaven-Sent Departed" [*Qingtang guan lihuan ye zhenmiao tiji* 慶唐觀李寰謁真廟題記]. It was engraved on the reverse side of the aforementioned "Golden Register's Ode to Purgation" in the third month of the third year of the Changqing era 長慶 [821-824] of the Muzong 穆宗 emperor. The text is included as the "Record of Auspicious Omens" [*Ji rui* 級瑞] in *The Complete Prose Works of the Tang Dynasty*, though unfortunately the final section of the list of court officials assigned to the sacrifices is omitted.[14] At the same time, *A Brief Introduction to Daoist Metal and Stone Inscriptions* offers a transcription of the text based on the "Supplement to the Metal and Stone Inscriptions of the Baqiong Studio" with the names that appeared in the list's final section.[15] These epigraphs were left by Li Huan 李寰 [862-888], a member of the imperial clan and the then—appointed regional rectifier and surveillance commissioner for military training for Jin 晉 and Ci 慈 Prefecture, among others, after he had gone to pay his respects at the monastery's temple. It gives us an idea of conditions at the Abbey Celebrating the

14 Dong Gao, *The Complete Prose Works*, roll 716, 7362.

15 "Baqiong shi jinshi buzheng 八瓊室金石補正 [Supplement to the Metal and Stone Inscriptions of the Baqiong Studio]," in *Shike shiliao xinbian*, vol. 1, book 6, roll 65, 5052-53; Chen Yuan, *A Brief Introduction*, 165.

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Tang during the mid-Tang period. As for Li Huan, his signature does not appear at the back of "The Golden Register's Ode to Purgation," but it in the first passage at the back of Xuanzong's "Inscriptions Recording the Sages" (see below for more details).

4. The *Records of Mount Longjiao* [*Longjiao shan ji* 龍角山記], a document that is part of the Ming dynasty's [1368-1644] *Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong Era* [*Zhengtong daozang* 正統道藏].[16] A collection of texts from the Tang, Song, and Jin dynasties, it includes epigraphs, imperial edicts, and prayers related to Mount Longjiao's Abbey Celebrating the Tang. It also mentions all three Tang epigraphs discussed above, which captured occasions of particular significance, with very few and slight differences with regard to spelling. The latest document in this book is "Prayers for the Rain to Come and Other Sacrificial Prayers" [*Qiyu Jiwen* 祈雨祭文], which is dated the fourth month of the eleventh year of the Dading era 大定 [1161-1189] and thus appeared in the Jin dynasty. Tablets from the Song and Jin dynasty that record events are of significant importance, because among them several have disappeared from other recording documents. As such, they are particularly useful in terms of understanding the evolution and transformations undergone by the Abbey Celebrating the Tang during the Song and Jin dynasty.
5. The *Annals of the Fushan County* [*Fushan xianzhi* 浮山縣志] from the Ming and Qing [1636-1912] dynasties. During the Ming and Qing reigns, different editions of the *Annals* were compiled one after the other. The earliest one is the work of the Ming compiler Xu An 許安 and was produced during the eleventh year of the Jiajing era 嘉靖 [1522-1566]. It was supplemented and edited twice during the Qing dynasty, in the twelfth year of the Kangxi emperor 康熙 [r. 1661-1722] and the tenth year of the Qianlong emperor 乾隆 [r. 1736-1796]. Among those local chronicles is also a large amount of valuable material regarding the repairs made to the Tiansheng Palace 天聖宮. These local annals have all been collated and are now available.[17]
6. *The Fushan County's* [*Linfen Prefecture*] *Scrolls in the Complete Collection of the Three Jin States' Stone Inscriptions*. Useful in terms of comparing printing plates with transcriptions, this book remains the most exhaustive

16 See *Dao zang* 道藏 [*The Daoist Canon*] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe; Shanghai: Shanghai shudian; Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1988), book 19, 692-700.

17 Fushan County's Bureau of Local Annals [*Fushan xian difang zhi bangongshi*], comp., *Ming Qing Fushan xian zhi* 明清浮山縣志 [*Annals of the Fushan County from the Ming and Qing Dynasties*] (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2010).

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compilation to date of material regarding the inscriptions found in the Abbey Celebrating the Tang and the Tiansheng Palace. Some inscriptions were tracked by people working on the monastery's archeological site, making it a primary source. Unfortunately, however, some of the plates have become worn down over time and have quite a few issues regarding the deciphering of characters and the philological explanations provided.

2 Lord Lao's Manifestations: The Construction of a Myth at the Dawn of the Tang Dynasty

When the Tang state was established, the dynasty received the full support of the Daoists. The Louguan 樓觀 priest Qi Hui 岐暉 not only used his monastery to offer provisions to the army of Princess Pingyang 平陽公主, the daughter of the emperor Li Yuan 李淵, but after the Tang army entered the Shaanxi plains (i.e., the Guanzhong 關中 region), he also made the Louguan priests proceed in the direction of Pujin Guan 蒲津關 to welcome the troops. The Supreme Clarity School [*Shangqing pai* 上清派] master Wang Yuanzhi 王遠知 secretly circulated an omen that foreshadowed the accession of Li Yuan to the throne, hence promoting among the public the Li clan's endeavor to establish a new state.[18] In fact, while Li Yuan was dispatching his troops, a series of Daoist myths emerged from east of the Yellow River, the area in Shanxi Province in which the Tang ascension to the throne was first established. These myths in particular then contributed to the foundation of the Tang state. For instance, even before the battle of Huoyi 霍邑, the Tang army had received the assistance of Mount Huo's 霍山 deity during the seventh month of the Yining era 義寧 [617-618] of the Sui emperor Gongdi 恭帝.[19] Furthermore, after Li Yuan had established the Tang dynasty, Li Shimin 李世民 [599-649], who later reigned as the Taizong 太宗 emperor, persisted in his attempt to subdue the warlords by waging a campaign against them. Hence, in the period that followed the founding of the state, it was not long before the Highest Lord

18 See Miyakawa Hisayuki 宮川尚志, *Rikuchōshi kenkyū: shūkyō hen* 六朝史研究·宗教篇 [*Research on the Six Dynasties' History: The Religion Volume*] (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1964), 176-187; Li Gang 李剛, "Tang Gaozu chuangye yu daojiao tuchen 唐高祖創業與道教圖讖 [The Emperor Gaozu of Tang and the Daoist Books of Omens]," *Zongjiao xue yanjiu* 宗教學研究 [*Religious Studies*] 3 (1998); Stephen Bokenkamp, "Time after Time: Taoist Apocalyptic History and the Founding of the T'ang Dynasty," *Asia Major*, 3rd series, 7, no. 1 (1994).

19 Regarding this event, see Wen Daya 溫大雅, *Datang chuangye qiju zhu* 大唐創業起居注 [*The Imperial Diary from the Days during Which the Tang Dynasty Was Established*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), roll 2, 23-24.

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Lao came to prominence in Fushan County in Jin Prefecture. The event was recorded in the Xuanzong emperor's "Inscriptions Recording the Sages":

> My distant ancestor, the Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin, is indeed the one whom the Daoists referred to as the Highest Lord Lao.… Lord Lao's manners were composed. He had a head of white hair and was riding a white horse with an auburn mane. He appeared in Mount Longjiao (which we used to call Mount Yangjiao) and delivered to us the augury which revealed the advent of our great dynasty. He then said to Ji Shanxing 吉善行, who came from Jiang Prefecture's 絳州 Datong 大通 stronghold: "I am the ancestor of your emperor, the Tang dynasty's ruler. Go and tell my posterity that their reign under Heaven will be a long and durable one." … Ji Shanxing received Lord Lao's revelation in the second month of the third year of the Wude 武德 era [618-626], but because he was afraid he could not lend credence to it, [and] he did not dare speak of it to others. The fourth month arrived, and the Highest Lord Lao appeared once more. That time, he told Ji Shanxing: "Once the stone turtle appears, you will be able to verify my prophecy." Taizong was then still Prince of Qin [221-207 BCE], and he was leading his troops into the area around Fen 汾 and Jiang Prefectures in a punitive expedition against Song Jin'gang 宋金剛. Jin Prefecture's administrator (also referred to as the vice commanding officer), whose name was Heruo Xiaoyi 賀若孝義, heard about Lord Lao appearing to Ji Shanxing and reported the story back to the emperor. Taizong promptly dispatched one of his most trustworthy followers, Du Ang 杜昂, to Mount Longjiao in order to perform the sacrifices in Lord Lao's honor, and in the process of performing the rituals, Du Ang clearly saw our Lord Lao. Du Ang then went back to report to Taizong, telling him: "It is true!" Taizong therefore sent Du Ang and Ji Shanxing to meet the Gaozu emperor. After they arrived in Chang'an, officials who had been dispatched from the Xun 郇 area happened to be there as well, and they gifted the emperor with a tortoise-shaped auspicious stone on which was written the following: "From now on, peace and tranquility will reign under Heaven. It will be so for millions and millions of days." Since those two things were in themselves quite extraordinary, Emperor Gaozu conferred on Ji Shanxing the title of Grand Master for Closing Court and sent Secretary Liu Xian 柳憲 in the direction of Mount Longjiao to perform a sacrificial ceremony in Lord Lao's honor. The moment the gems and silks that served as sacrificial gifts were offered, Lord Lao manifested himself once more.

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Beginning in the second month of the second year of the Wude era, Liu Wuzhou 劉武周 had been incessantly launching attacks on Bing 并 Prefecture. During the sixth month, Chancellor Pei Ji 裴寂 was appointed as the Jin prefectural commander-in-chief in the campaign against Liu Wuzhou. In the ninth month, he was defeated in Jie 介 Prefecture by Liu Wuzhou's general Song Jingang, and Bing Prefecture fell to Liu Wuzhou. In the tenth month, Li Shimin received orders sending him on an expedition against the enemy. He confronted Liu Wuzhou and Song Jingang on the border between Pu 蒲 and Jin Prefectures. By the fourth month of the following year, Li Shimin had crushed Song Jingang's forces in Jie Prefecture, his victory enabling him to recapture Bing Prefecture as well. Lord Lao's three manifestations occurred precisely at this moment, when war clouds hung over the country. As with what had led to the manifestation of Mount Huo's deity at the beginning of the Taiyuan 太原 uprising, the Highest Lord Lao's multiple apparitions in Mount Yangjiao are probably the result of Li Shimin's attempt to raise the spirits of his troops by adding a spectacular twist to the story, at a time when they were confronting a grim military situation. As recorded in the "Inscriptions Recording the Sages," after having sent Liu Xian to perform a sacrificial ceremony for Lord Lao, Gaozu established a temple in Mount Longjiao, "with engravings adorning the saintly features of the emperor and real guards painted with beautiful color patterns." He also changed the county's name to the Sacred Mountain County [*Shenshan xian* 神山縣]. Afterward, Lord Lao appeared twice again on Mount Yangjiao, once to foretell that a withered branch of cypress would burst into bloom at the temple in Bo 亳 Prefecture and then to predict that the Tang would be victorious against Liu Heita 劉黑闥.

Yet the Mount Yangjiao case differs from that of Mount Huo: Mount Huo had indeed already become part of the Sacred Mountains, Rivers and Seas [*yuezhen haidu* 岳鎮海瀆] ceremonial system at the time of the Sui dynasty, known as Jizhou Prefecture 冀州鎮 (later referred to as the Central Prefecture). As for Mount Yangjiao, it was far from a famous mountain to start with, at least, in the traditional sense. Regardless of whether we consider it from the point of view of the imperial geographical system and its designation of cities and administrative divisions or whether we look at the heavenly abodes that are considered sacred in the Daoist system, Mount Yangjiao never enjoyed any special status. It could be said that the Daoist tradition of Mount Yangjiao resembles that of the Lord Lao Temple [*Laojun ci* 老君祠] located at the foot of the mountain. In other words, it was established under extraordinary circumstances and strictly to pursue political goals, in a very pragmatic sense. At its foundation and origin, it represented a state's quest for power, not a local tradition of faith. Nevertheless, under the conditions in which these power dynamics unfolded,

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the faith in Lord Lao took root and started to spread in the area, becoming a new and fairly common religious tradition. From the time the marginal and uninfluential Mount Yangjiao was incorporated into the grand narrative of the dynasty's foundation, all faiths that were associated with the period before the Tang seemed to be, without exception, not worth mentioning. In fact, the five manifestations of the Highest Lord Lao reported in "The Inscriptions Recording the Sages" were depicted as the most impressive events to have happened in the history of Mount Yangjiao. Every time the temple was renovated during the Tang, Song, Jin, or Yuan dynasties and every time a new monument was erected, this glorious period in history was recalled and celebrated, even down to the present.

3 The Tang Emperor Xuanzong and the Golden Age of the Abbey Celebrating the Tang

After the inauguration of the Lord Lao Temple at Mount Yangjiao by Gaozu, a series of propitious signs were recorded near the temple. One instance of this is reported in Xuanzong's "The Inscriptions Recording the Sages": "Afterward, during the Zhen'guan era 貞觀 [627-649] of the Taizong emperor, auspicious clouds of many hues floated above the temple, and during Emperor Gaozong's 高宗 [628-683] reign, propitious clouds bringing good fortune appeared near the memorial steles." During the second month of the Qianfeng era 乾封 [666-668], the Gaozong emperor, after having performed the *Fengshan* 封禪 ceremony at Mount Tai 泰山, returned to Laozi's hometown in Bo Prefecture to visit the Temple of Laozi 老子廟 and to honor the Highest and Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin 太上玄元皇帝.[20] Therefore, it is possible that the Lord Lao Temple, which lies at the foot of Mount Yangjiao, was renamed the Temple of the Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin around that time or shortly afterward. However, we could not find any further information about this memorial temple in the historical data from Tang documents and stone inscriptions, at least for the period in which Wu Zetian 武則天 [624-705] reigned. Not only did Wu Zetian have more esteem for Buddhist teachings, but, more importantly, the temple was too intimately connected to the founding myths of the Tang dynasty and as such was far more important than other Daoist temples in terms of its relationship to Tang politics. This is the actual reason,

20 See "Gaozong benji xia 高宗本紀 下 [Part Two of the Basic Annals of Emperor Gaozong]," in *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 [*History of the Early Tang Dynasty*], comp. Liu Xu 劉昫 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 5:90.

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following the restoration of the Tang dynasty, that its fate quickly took a favorable turn. On the fifth day of the seventh month of the second year of the Xiantian era 先天 [712-713], Yang Taixi 楊太希, a Daoist priest from the Chang'an Taiqing Monastery, received an order from Ruizong 睿宗 [662-716] instructing him to serve as "Commissioner for the Cultivation of Merit and Virtue with the honor of having been conferred an imperial mandate to deliver offerings to Mount Longjiao." [*Fenggao toulong xiugongde shi* 奉誥投龍修功德使] Yang Taixi hence went to Mount Yangjiao to gift the Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin with regalia resembling that worn by emperors. After having held a five-day ceremony of purgation [*zhai* 齋] and sacrificial offerings [*jiao* 醮] and in order to demonstrate the special relationship the temple enjoyed with the imperial family, Yang Taixi also built the Celestial Worthy of the Golden Portal [*Jinque tianzun* 金闕天尊] and the Celestial Worthy of the Original Beginning [*Yuanshi tianzun* 元始天尊] as well as four memorials to which prayers could be addressed and that were personifying both Ruizong and Xuanzong as well as the two ordained princesses, the Princess Jinxian 金仙 and the Princess Yuzhen 玉真.[21]

3.1 *The Construction of Emperor Xuanzong's "Inscriptions Recording the Sages"*

During the Kaiyuan and Tianbao eras, Xuanzong initiated a surge in the number of adherents to the Daoist faith and devoted particular attention to Mount Yangjiao's Temple of the Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin. Around the fourteenth year of the Kaiyuan era, multiple auspicious signs occurred at the temple, such as trees with interlocking branches, vines wound around cypresses, and withered branches burgeoning anew.[22] All those signs were seen as symbols of the Tang dynasty's prosperous destiny. For this reason, Xuanzong not only ordered the transfer of seven Daoist priests from Jin Prefecture who were both strong and steadfast in faith, appointing them to the Temple of the Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin, but in the sixteenth year of the Kaiyuan era, he also officially changed the temple's name to the Abbey Celebrating the Tang and added his own signature to the temple's facade. Xuanzong

21 See "Longjiao shan ji 龍角山記 [Records of Mount Longjiao]," in *The Daoist Canon*, 19:693.

22 See roll 24, "The Imperial Volumes: Auspicious Omens" [*Diwang bu: furui* 帝王部·符瑞] and roll 53, "The Imperial Volumes: Praising the Yellow Emperor and Lord Lao" [*Diwang bu: shang Huang Lao* 帝王部·尚黃老] of Wang Qinruo 王欽若 and Yang Yi 楊億, comp., *Cefuyuangui* 冊府元龜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 259, 590. In the original text (roll 24), the "ninth month" [九月] was erroneously transcribed as the "ninth year" [九年].

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personally inscribed the text of the "The Great Tang Dynasty's Inscriptions of Mount Longjiao's Abbey Celebrating the Tang Recording the Sages" not long afterward. The stele was erected the following year, on the third day of the ninth month. The engravings declare: "Gaozu's phoenix soared through the air, the clouds lifted, and the sun shone over Jin [Shanxi]. During the long wars fought by Taizong, the wind converged toward the fields of Qin [Shaanxi]. At Mount Longjiao's Capital of Immortals, the emperor's troops were preparing themselves." From that moment onward, then, the Abbey Celebrating the Tang was also praised by people who referred to it as "The Capital of Immortals at Mount Dragon's Horn" [*Longjiao xiandu* 龍角仙都].

Unlike the text that appears on the front of the stele, the magnificent signatures are gathered on the back of the stele and display the Tang dynasty's most powerful figures and may leave a deeper impression. These signatures are divided into three sections,[23] which all contain a considerable amount of important information. To start with, the order in which the signatures are arranged was conscientiously determined: in the first section appear the crown prince, the princes, a few princes presumptive, and commandery princes—a total of twenty-nine people who all belonged to the imperial clan. Their names are listed so that they appear in the most splendid and celebrated way, something that was meant to strongly emphasize the fact that the Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin and the Li Tang imperial clan shared the same bloodline. The second section mentions thirty-four people, consisting mostly of chancellors, senior officials from the Six Ministries, Nine Courts, and Five Directorates as well as administrators of the three prefectures Jingzhao 京兆, Henan 河南, and Taiyuan. The third section mentions nine people: first, the two officials who were in charge of the stele's inauguration and then three high-ranking eunuchs, such as Yang Sixu 楊思勖 and Gao Lishi 高力士, as well as four high-ranking army generals.

Second, the list of names on the back of the stele—especially, the third section, which mentions Bai Zhishen 白知慎—provides us with a new lead for understanding how the monastery was run. Bai Zhishen served as the prefect of Jin, the prefecture in which the Monastery was located that concurrently acted as the "Abbey Celebrating the Tang Commissioner as Appointed by Imperial Decree." The fact that the prefecture's senior official also assumed

23 One more passage appears in the highest portion of the back of the stele, but it does not pertain to the signatures added at the time the stele was erected. It was added by someone, such as Li Huan, in the third year of the Changqing 長慶 era <821-824>. This is discussed in the following section.

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the position of commissioner for the monastery highlights the unique status enjoyed by this Daoist temple.

Third, this list of names also reveals some details concerning the work necessitated by the construction and the engraving of the stele itself. For instance, the four-character combination *yu-zhi-yu-shu* 御制御书, which appears on the front of the stele, was the work of Zhang Yue 張說, the former chancellor and, at that time, leader of the literary lyceum. The person who was entirely in charge of this event was Lü Xiang, the "Commissioner of the Building, Rubbing and Engraving of Mount Longjiao's Monument Recording the Sages," who was also director of the Bureau of Receptions and one of the Academy of Scholarly Worthies. He is the person who engraved the last row on the front of the stele, which reads "Built during the seventeenth year of the Kaiyuan era, avoiding Taisui 太岁 in the ninth month of Jisi 己巳, the third day of the lunar month in Jichou 己丑 and in Xinmao 辛卯," as well as the entire text on the back. Gao Lishi, to whom the later generations' local historical annals refer, did not play any particular role in the process of erecting this specific stele.[24]

For both the state and Mount Longjiao's Abbey Celebrating the Tang, the "Inscriptions Recording the Sages" commissioned by Xuanzong were extremely significant. This imposing stele, which is 3.5 meters high and stands upright at the monastery's gate, in addition to having a specially built and magnificent pavilion, is undoubtedly a public building with a distinct commemorating character. For the state, the claim, through the stele, of a shared lineage with Lord Lao by the Tang imperial clan as well as the multiple auspicious signs witnessed at the monastery around that time all bore crucial testimony to the firm establishment of the dynasty's political legitimacy. The stele's significance was perhaps even greater for the Abbey Celebrating the Tang. People who go to the temple are first greeted by this colossal monument, whose front exhibits calligraphy by the Xuanzong emperor, and the list of names on the back seemingly includes all the high-ranking officials who attended the imperial court during this period. One can easily see how anyone who had the chance to stand in

24 In the *Annals of Fushan County* dating from the eleventh year of the Jiajing era appears the following note regarding the Tiansheng Palace: "In the fourteenth year of the Kaiyuan era, the temple's name was changed to the 'Abbey Celebrating the Tang,' and the emperor commissioned a stele to be engraved and ordered Gao Lishi to supervise the work." This passage is in the sixth roll, titled "Ancient Sites: Buddhist and Daoist Temples" [*Guji: siguan* 古蹟·寺觀] in *Annals of Fushan County from the Ming and Qing Dynasties*, 29. The historical annals recently published by Fushan County insist mostly on Gao Lishi's relation to the Abbey Celebrating the Tang, even though these claims remain entirely unfounded.

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front of this stele at that specific moment in history must have felt the awe-inspiring prestige of the imperial family as well as the oppressive authority it exercised over the population, a feeling that must in turn have given rise to a sense of deference and solemn respect.

3.2 *"The Golden Register's Ode to Purgation" and the Abbey Celebrating the Tang during the Years of the Tianbao Era*

In the second year of the Tianbao era, another noteworthy stele was erected on the site of the Abbey Celebrating the Tang on the fifteenth day of the tenth month, when the people were celebrating the Lower Primordial Festival [*Xiayuan jie* 下元節]. The inscriptions of "The Golden Register's Ode to Purgation" were composed by Cui Mingyun and engraved by the calligrapher Shi Weize. This time, the stele was built in order to commemorate a grand ceremony for the Golden Register's Purgation [*Jinlu zhai* 金籙齋]. Guo Chuji 郭處寂, who was then the abbot of the monastery, was one of the seven Daoist priests who were "strong and steadfast in faith" chosen among their peers in Jin Prefecture in the sixteenth year of the Kaiyuan era. In the twenty-fifth year of the Kaiyuan era [737], he petitioned the court about holding the Golden Register's Purgation ceremony. The ceremony is one of the Lingbao doctrine's nine main kinds of purification rituals, which aims to bring harmony between ying and yang and prays for the blessing of the state and its sovereign.[25] It was indeed entirely appropriate for this important ceremony to be held at the monastery, which was after all the sacred Daoist site where the founding myth of the Tang dynasty originated. As written on the stele, "palace attendants and high Daoist masters arrived from the imperial capital, and so did the soft words of the emperor's secret imperial decree, which had come directly from Heaven." Yet not only did Xuanzong have eunuchs and important Daoist figures come to the monastery specially for the occasion, but he probably composed the ode himself, a small detail perhaps, but one that makes it possible for us to imagine the grand scale of the ceremony.

"The Golden Register's Ode to Purgation" is a primary source through which we can understand better, among other aspects, the sculptures and the daily religious activities at the monastery. For instance, the stele's inscriptions can teach us about some particular aspects of the consecration of the Highest Lord

25 See "Cibu langzhong yuanwailang 祠部郎中员外郎 [Supernumerary Official for the Director of the Ministry of Sacrifices]," in *Tang liu dian* 唐六典 [*The Six Codes of the Tang Dynasty*], ed. Tang Xuanzong 唐玄宗 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 4:125. See also Lü Pengzhi 呂鵬志, "Ling bao liu zhai kao 靈寶六齋考 [A Study of the Lingbao Six Days of Fasting]," *Wen shi* 文史 3 (2011).

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Lao's image by the monastery, namely, that "the dragon-embroidered robe enlightened its appearance and the jade-tassel headwear bestowed Lord Lao with the posthumous honor of imperial status." It seems that Lord Lao was not wearing Daoist garb but was, instead, adorned with the imperial regalia that consisted of a dragon-embroidered robe and ceremonious jade-tassel headwear. In striking contrast to this is the most imposing and extant Tang-dynasty statue of Lord Lao, which was originally enshrined in the Chaoyuan Pavilion 朝元閣 of the Lintong 臨潼 District's Huaqing Palace 華清宮 and is now stored in the Xi'an Stele Forest Museum [*Beilin bowuguan* 碑林博物館]. In that case specifically, the figure of Lord Lao was wearing a Daoist cloak. As for other sculptural representations of Lord Lao from the Sui and Tang dynasty that can still be observed, for the most part they all wear Daoist garments.

To have Lord Lao wear an imperial gown and crown was obviously a way to emphasize his status as the progenitor of the Tang emperor, by portraying him as an "emperor" of a kind. Moreover, it is possible that this way of representing Lord Lao influenced to a certain degree the making of the statues found at the Taiqing Palace in Chang'an. It is recorded in *The Great Tang Dynasty's Annals of the Sacrifices Offered to Heaven and Earth* [*Datang jiaosi lu* 大唐郊祀錄] that "the sculpture portraying the genuine features of our great and sage ancestor has been placed at the south door's entrance, between the door and the window. It is wearing the imperial robe embroidered with dragons and the crown, and colorful silk garments as well as pearls and jades were considered to adorn him."[26] Following the spring of the twenty-ninth year of the Kaiyuan era [741], during the first month of the lunar year, a temple in honor of the Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin was built in both capitals as well as in several prefectures,[27] and in the third month of the second year of the Tianbao era, the temple in Chang'an was officially renamed the Taiqing Palace.[28] Because it was founded much later than the Abbey Celebrating the Tang, it is possible that it was influenced by the sculptures that had been created for the latter. In fact, the Lord Lao statues at the Monastery were already considered unique.

26 See the section "Offerings to the Taiqing Palace" [*Jianxian Taiqing gong* 薦獻太清宮] to which has been added the document "Rites from the Tang Kaiyuan Era [*Datang kaiyuan li* 大唐開元禮]," in *Datang jiaosi lu* 大唐郊祀錄 [*The Great Tang Dynasty's Annals of the Sacrifices Offered to Heaven and Earth*], comp. Wang Jing 王涇 (Tokyo: Kyuko shoin, 1972), roll 9, 788.

27 See part 2 of "The Imperial Biography of Emperor Xuanzong [*Xuanzong benji* 玄宗本紀]," in *History of the Early Tang Dynasty*, roll 9, 213.

28 See the section "Worshipping the Teachings of the Dao [*Zunchong Daojiao* 尊崇道教]," in Wang Pu 王溥, *Tang hui yao* 唐會要 [*The Tang Compendium*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), roll 50, 1015.

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In the ninth month of the third year of the Dahe era 大和 [929-935] of the Wu 吳 Kingdom, when the Maoshan 茅山 School rehabilitated the Lingbao Academy 靈寶院, it is recorded that "prior to the construction of the old pavilion of the Hall of Auspicious Figures, in the three adjoining rooms, there must be statues of Lord Lao exactly as he appears at Mount Yangjiao."[29] As one can see, the rules that had to be followed in order to reproduce the model standards were quite unusual. Nonetheless, the fact that the Abbey Celebrating the Tang's Lord Lao sculpture was wearing imperial garments visually confirmed the Li Tang clan's shared line of descent with the Highest Lord Lao.

It is also said in "The Golden Register's Ode to Purgation" that every Daoist temple under heaven had to hold a ceremony in order to pray for both the country's and the common people's good fortune and that they had to do so on the day of each of the Primordial Festivals, namely, the Lantern Festival [*Shangyuan ri* 上元日] (the fifteenth day of the first lunar month), the Death-Spirit Festival [*Zhongyuan ri* 中元日] (the fifteenth of the seventh month), and the Lower Primordial Festival [*Xiayuan ri* 下元日] (the fifteenth of the tenth month).[30] The ode also refers to Xuanzong's birthday, which was to be celebrated on the fifth day of the eighth month. Later on, during the seventeenth year of the Kaiyuan era, it was officially declared a statutory holiday that ended up being known as the "Thousand-Autumn Festival" [*Qianqiu jie* 千秋節]. As a Daoist temple, the Abbey Celebrating the Tang would hold a special ceremony of purgation on all four of those days (for the most part, the Golden Register's Purgation ceremony was to be held to pray for the good fortune of the country's sovereign). This was determined by the monastery's dual nature, functioning concurrently as a Daoist temple and an imperial ancestral shrine.

29 See Wang Qixia 王棲霞, [*Wu Xugong chongjian Lingbao yuan ji* 吳徐公重建靈寶院記] "Record on Wu Xugong's Rebuilding the Lingbao Academy," in *The Complete Prose Works of the Tang Dynasty*, roll 928, 9677.

30 See Li Fengmao 李豐楙, "Yansu yu youxi: daojiao sanyuan zhai yu Tangdai jiesu 嚴肅與遊戲：道教三元齋與唐代節俗 [Solemnity and Pleasure: The Daoist Fast of the Three Primordials in Relation to the Tang Dynasty's Holidays and Customs]," in *Chuancheng yu chuangxin: zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wen zhe yanjiu suo shi zhou nian jinian lunwen ji* 傳承與創新：中央研究院中國文哲研究所十週年紀念論文集 [*Continuing the Tradition and Innovating for the Future: A Collection of Essays to Commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the Academia Sinica's Chinese Literature and Philosophy Research Institute*], ed. Zhong Caijun 鍾彩鈞 (Taipei: Zhongyanyuan wen zhe yanjiusuo, 1999).

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4 The Six Sages and the Auspicious Cypress: The Omen Announcing the Tang Restoration

On the fourteenth year of the Tianbao era, the An-Shi Rebellion [An Lushan; *Anshi zhiluan* 安史之亂] broke out. A bitter war ensued, which lasted nearly eight years, and though it was eventually quelled by the Tang army, it had a devastating impact on the dynasty. The separatist regimes led by the military governors in the Hebei region in particular managed to tremendously undermine the country's central authorities. Starting with the emperor Daizong 代宗 [726-779], multiple generations of emperors strived to remove those governors from power, hoping that doing so would restore the powerful and prosperous empire that they had once had. In this context, the Abbey Celebrating the Tang fulfilled the role of bastion of the empire.

As recorded in "Li Huan's Epigraphs of the Abbey Celebrating the Tang's Temple of Paying One's Respects to the Heaven-Sent Departed" from the third year of the Changqing era under the Muzong emperor [823], the kudzu vine that clung to the monastery's cypress tree developed a new tendril in the third month of the fourteenth year of the Dali 大曆 era [766-779]. This special occurrence was put down in writing in augural documents. In the third month of the third year of the Changqing era, a new tendril appeared. Li Huan, who was a member of the imperial clan and was also a regional rectifier and surveillance commissioner for military training in Jin and Ci Prefecture, among others, considered it a symbol of the ongoing destiny of the Tang state. Therefore, together with allies such as the army supervisory commissioner Wu Zaihe 吳再和, he proceeded to the Abbey Celebrating the Tang to offer sacrifices to the Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin. He ordered the painting of Lord Lao's features, which would be presented to the Muzong emperor, in addition to having the epigraphs discussed here engraved on the back of the "Golden Register's Ode to Purgation." As far as Muzong was concerned, this auspicious omen occurred at the exact moment when revolts were breaking out north of the Yellow River. Once again, central authorities were unable to bring under their control the You 幽 Prefecture, Chengde 成德, and Weibo 魏博 defense commands. Armed confrontations hence kept occurring between them and the imperial troops. In this particular moment of crisis during which Muzong faced great adversity, the monastery's auspicious omen undoubtedly offered him some consolation.

In his epigraphs, Li Huan also declares: "The memorial temple is situated at Sacred Mountain's Abbey Celebrating the Tang in honor of our divine ancestor, the Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin. With the ceremony over, we paid

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our respects to the departed Emperors Gaozu, Taizong, Gaozong, Zhongzong 中宗 [656-710], Ruizong, and Xuanzong at the temple in honor of heaven-sent rulers." This epigraph makes it clear that the saintly features of emperors from Gaozu to Xuanzong were displayed at the monastery. It had been a tradition to enshrine and worship representations of the departed emperors in Buddhist temples since the reign of the Sui emperor Wen 隋文帝 [541-604]. As the Tang rulers primarily stressed the imperial family's genealogical connection to Laozi, they preferred to enshrine ancestors from past dynasties in specially chosen Daoist temples. For instance, during Xuanzong's reign, at the Lord Lao's Temple located at Beimang Mountain 北邙山 in Luoyang 洛陽, murals were produced in which Wu Daozi 吳道子 is known to have painted the five saintly icons of emperors from Gaozu to Ruizong. In Daizong's time, Xin 忻 Prefecture also had its own Temple of the Seven Saint Emperors [*Qisheng miao* 七聖廟]. During the period of the Five Dynasties, at the end of Tang rule, the Hall of the Seven Saints [*Qisheng tang* 七聖堂] was added to the Huaqing Palace, while the Taiqing Palace, in Bo Prefecture, had portraits of six saintly emperors, "which were placed on both sides of Lord Lao to accompany him."[31] As for the "temple in honor of the six saintly and heaven-sent rulers" to which Li Huan's epigraphs refer, it most probably consecrated the icons of the six emperors who came after Gaozu. According to "The Abbey Celebrating the Tang's Stele Inscriptions with an Additional Preface" [*Qingtang guan beiming bing xu* 慶唐觀碑銘並序], which was composed by the Sacred Mountain County's District Magistrate Han Wang 韓望, on the first year of the Dazhongxiangfu era 大中祥符 [1008-1016] of the Northern Song, "originally, the Li Tang clan would paint the saintly features of the six emperors, from the sage emperor Yao 尧 to Xuanzong, and they had them flanked by main halls dedicated to the Three Primordial Sovereigns."[32] The six emperors' paintings no doubt lent a strong aura, reminiscent of the Tang imperial clan's ancestral shrine, to the Abbey Celebrating the Tang.

Below "Li Huan's Epigraphs of the Abbey Celebrating the Tang's Temple of Paying One's Respects to the Heaven-Sent Departed" appears a list of names of various officials who came to the monastery to pay their respects. The list includes the names of officials from everywhere across the country, primarily staff officers and officials at various ranks and in various places. Taken together, they constituted the core leadership of the region around Jin and Ci 磁 Prefectures. Several influential representatives from various regions also

31 See Lei Wen, *Beyond the Temple*, 111-114.

32 Chen Yuan, *A Brief Introduction*, 238.

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appear on the list. Those all came from the same family clan, the Fang Shi 方氏, in addition to having achieved official rank through the imperial examinations. They belonged, in sum, to one of the period's most influential clans. The fact that they, together with officials from diverse regions, came to pay homage at the monastery's ancestral shrine clearly demonstrates that, through the practice of Daoism, the offering of sacrifices at the shrine was well integrated in the social life of the surrounding areas.

On that occasion, during which he went to pay his respects at the monastery's Temple of the Great Sage Ancestor and Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin as well as to the portraits of the Six Saintly Emperors, Li Huan originally intended to thank Lord Lao for the auspicious cypresses and kudzu vines that he had lent to the monastery, namely, those that had announced to the entire country the good fortune and the ongoing destiny of the dynasty. As revolts were once again erupting on the Yellow River's north shore, and as war clouds were covering the country, these omens were seen as demonstrating Lord Lao's support for the imperial court. However, what these epigraphs reflect is actually the political context of the mid- and late Tang dynasty. Indeed, for Li Huan and the army supervisory commissioner to have included themselves among these epigraphs' three signatures, for them to actually be engraved on the back of "The Inscriptions Recording the Sages," which had been commissioned by Xuanzong, and finally for their names to appear above those of figures such as the former crown prince and other princes—all these actions should be viewed as proof of a certain disrespect toward the imperial family and as a clear breach of ritual propriety.

5 Blending in: The Monastery's Transformations in the Post-Tang Dynasty Period

At the end of the first year of the Qianfu era 乾符 [874-879] of Xizong 僖宗, an uprising led by Huang Chao 黃巢 suddenly erupted. The chaos from this armed conflict lasted ten years, a historical period that not only struck a heavy blow to the Tang imperial court but also had disastrous consequences for Daoist temples all over the country. Yet because Mount Longjiao was located in a secluded area south of Jin Prefecture, it suffered only minor effects. Sun Yizhong 孫夷中 in the Northern Song dynasty writes, in "The Three Cave Writings on Daoist Ceremonies" [*Sandong xiudao yi* 三洞修道儀], that "During the decline of the Five Dynasties period, faith in Daoism had weakened.… Only one majestic monument to Daoism remained, and that was the Taiqing Palace in Bo Prefecture. Some secondary temples still functioned as well, such as those

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in Beimang, Yangtai 陽臺, and Yangfu 陽輔 and the Tang Blessings temple."[33] Clearly, after these years of violent upheaval, Mount Longjiao's Abbey Celebrating the Tang had become one of the few important temples that had survived in northern areas. This certainly laid the foundation for the subsequent and continuous evolution of the monastery during the Song and Jin dynasties.

Following the ultimate downfall of the Tang dynasty, the Abbey Celebrating the Tang lost the direct connection it had cultivated with the imperial court's political legitimacy. This forced the monastery to gradually transform its vocation; hence, its relationship with the local communities eventually became even stronger than it had been in the past. During the spring of the seventh year of the Taipingxingguo era 太平興國 [976-984] in the Northern Song dynasty, Sacred Mountain County suffered a drought and, at the Abbey Celebrating the Tang, District Magistrate Zhang Zhao 張昭 commanded that people pray for rain to come, in a strategy that was deemed successful. He hence had the halls and the sculptures renovated, and a stele memorial was also erected in the third month of the first year in the Chunhua era 淳化 [990-994].[34] During the Later Tang dynasty, in the Five Dynasties period, the functions performed by Buddhist and Daoist temples increasingly converged with those that had been performed mainly by local shrines. At the dawn of the Song dynasty, the monastery became the place where locals would go to recite prayers for the rain to come.[35] It was precisely this orientation, which had been taken by the monastery at the end of the Tang dynasty, that led it to eventually integrate itself even more fully into the daily lives of local people.

Of course, some attempts were made to establish relationships between the Abbey Celebrating the Tang and the new dynasty in power, and the Northern Song rulers perpetuated the Tang's policies supporting the Daoist faith, but in doing so, they granted the temples ample leeway. During the first year of the Jingde era 景德 [1004-1007], Liang Zhizhen 梁志真, the monastery's

33 See the preface to "The Three Caves Writings on Daoist Ceremonies" [*Sandong xiudao yi* 三洞修道儀], which dates to the sixth year of the Xianping 咸平 era under the Song emperor Zhenzong 真宗 in *The Daoist Canon* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe; Shanghai: Shanghai shudian; Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1988), book 32, 166.

34 See Wang Qianli 王千里, "Jinzhou Shenshan xian longjiao shan qing tang guan chongxiu gongde bei 晉州神山縣龍角山慶唐觀重修功德碑 [The Memorial to the Meritorious Renovations of the Abbey Celebrating the Tang, Situated at Mount Longjiao in the Jin Prefecture's Sacred Mountain County]," in *The Complete Collection of the Three Jin States' Stone Inscriptions*, 34.

35 Lei Wen, "Lun zhong wan Tang Fo Dao jiao yu minjian cisi de heliu 論中晚唐佛道教與民間祠祀的合流 [Buddhism and Daoism during the Mid- and Late Tang Dynasty and Syncretism in Popular Sacrificial Ceremonies]," *Zongjiao xue yanjiu* 宗教學研究 3 (2003). See also Lei Wen, *Beyond the Temple*, 276-299.

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director-in-chief, who was also a Daoist priest, sent a memorial to the Zhenzong emperor 真宗 [968-1022] soliciting the refurbishment of the temple. While the reconstruction work was taking place, auspicious omens like ones that had occurred repeatedly during the Tang dynasty were witnessed again, this time in the form of sweet dew falling. In the first year of the Dazhongxiangfu era, another stele was specially erected to commemorate the occasion.[36] Eight years later, a similar sight was witnessed: "On the eighth year of the Dazhongxiangfu era, at Jin Prefecture's Abbey Celebrating the Tang, a new pagoda tree grew among the ancient cypresses; more than 10 feet high."[37] The monastery continually provided the new rulers with auspicious omens to serve as proof of their political legitimacy, and the Northern Song rulers eventually came to realize that the monastery's name, which referred specifically to the Tang dynasty, was far from appropriate. Therefore, in the second month of the fourth year of the Tiansheng era 天聖 [1023-1032], they issued an imperial edict ordering the name to be changed to the Tiansheng Monastery [*Tiansheng guan* 天聖觀].[38] The monastery's name was to honor the first era under the Renzong emperor 仁宗 [1010-1063], and in that sense, it re-established, to a certain degree, a relationship between the monastery and the new dynasty, and moreover, this event had strong symbolic significance for the monastery.

From the Song dynasty until the Jin dynasty, the Tiansheng Monastery went through many phases of renovation. For instance, in the first year of the Zhenghe era 政和 [1111-1118] under the Song emperor Huizong, the Hall of the Three Purities [*Sanqing dian* 三清殿] was rebuilt.[39] In the seventh year of the Xuanhe era 宣和 [1119-1125], Mount Longjiao's Xianshi Temple 顯施廟, which had been erected in honor of the Hua Pool's [*Huachi* 華池] deity, was given a new name and was then known as the temple of Jiarun Hou 嘉潤侯.[40]

36 See "The Abbey Celebrating the Tang's Stele Inscriptions with an Additional Preface [*Qingtang guan beiming bing xu* 慶唐觀碑銘並序]" composed by Sacred Mountain County's District Magistrate Han Wang, in *A Brief Introduction*, 238.

37 See part 3 of "Wu xing zhi 五行志 [Records on the Five Phases]," in *History of the Song Dynasty*.

38 See both the plate and the transcriptions of "The Secretariat-Chancellery Officializing the Tiansheng Monastery Stele" [*Zhongshumenxia die Tiansheng guan bei* 中書門下牒天聖觀碑] in *The Complete Collection of the Three Jin States' Stone Inscriptions*, 37-38.

39 See "The Memorial Commemorating the Hall of the Three Purities' Reconstruction [*Chongxiu sanqing dian ji* 重修三清殿記]," in *A Brief Introduction*, 319. The inscriptions also appear in the "Records of Mount Longjiao" in *The Daoist Canon*, 19:698.

40 "Longjiao shan xianshi miao jiarun hou chi bei 龍角山顯施廟嘉潤侯敕碑 [The Imperial Edict about Mount Longjiao's Xianshi Temple and Jiarun Hou]," in *Shanyou shike congbian* 山右石刻叢編 [*Edited Collection of Stone Inscriptions from the Area East of the Taihang Mountains*], in *Shike shiliao xinbian* 石刻史料新編 [A New Compilation

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Two years later, in the second year of the Jingkang era 靖康 [1126-1127], the Jin 金 brought the Northern Song dynasty to an end and took control over the Shanxi region. Yet the change of dynasty did not seem to affect Mount Longjiao and the Tiansheng Monastery. Based on what is recorded in the "Records on Renovating the Jiarun Hou Hall" [*Chongxiu jiarunhou dian ji* 重修嘉潤侯殿記], which dates from the eleventh year of the Tianhui era 天會 [1123-1135] under the Jin emperor Taizong, the Hua Pool was a pond at the summit of Mount Longjiao, and for the common people of the Sacred Mountain County, it was the place they faced when it was time to pray for rain. Moreover, after villagers such as Li Yin 李隱 and Chen Sigong 陳思恭 set to work refurbishing the main hall, they purposely picked the Daoist Death-Spirit Festival to hold, in the early hours before dawn, the ceremony for the completion of their work. They also invited the Tiansheng Monastery's priests to arrange a purgation ceremony and to "meet and celebrate jointly" with the people who had worked hard on the reconstruction of the main hall.[41] That type of ceremony contributed to consolidating even further the strong relationship between the monastery and the Hua Pool's deity, which was part of Mount Longjiao's local pantheon. Not only did the Daoist monks living at the monastery organize a purgative ceremony for the occasion, but the fast was to be held in honor of the Daoist Death-Spirit Festival. It provided an opportunity for the monastery's priests to get to know the region's influential clans and the common people better, and to form stronger bonds with them. In fact, quite a few prayers from the Jin dynasty, which ask for rain or express gratitude for the rainfall, have been preserved in the *Records of Mount Longjiao*. Again, in the sixth month of the third year of the Mingchang era 明昌 [1190-1196] under the Jin emperor Zhangzong 章宗 [1168-1208], the monastery's superintendent and Daoist priest Yan Shi 閻師 similarly raised funds to rebuild the severely damaged pavilion housing the Tang emperor Xuanzong's "Inscriptions Recording the Sages."[42]

During the Yuan dynasty, the Tiansheng Monastery became the Tiansheng Palace. In the Ming-Qing period, it developed even stronger ties with the

of Historical Material Related to Stone Inscriptions] (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1977), vol. 1, book 20, roll 18, 1, 5348-49.

41 Wang Jianzhong 王建中, [*Chongxiu Jiarun hou dian ji* 重修嘉潤侯殿記] "Records of Renovating the Jiarun Hou Hall," in the "Records of Mount Longjiao," in *The Daoist Canon*, 19:698.

42 Mao Hui 毛麾, "Records on Renovating the Pavilion Housing the 'Inscriptions Recording the Sages' at the Tiansheng Monastery in Pingyang Prefecture's Fushan County [Pingyang fu Fushan xian Tiansheng guan chongxiu jisheng beiting ji 平陽府浮山縣天聖觀重修紀聖碑亭記]," in *Edited Collection of Stone Inscriptions*, roll 22, 15438-39.

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surrounding rural communities, and in the second year of the Ming emperor Longqing 隆慶 [1567-1572], when the Tiansheng Palace was renovated, more than 700 people from nearly 80 villages contributed funds and helped with the repairs. A detailed list of names on which people are entered according to their village appears on the Stele to Commemorate the Names from Every Village That Donated Funds or Material to Renovate the Tiansheng Palace [*Chongxiu Tiansheng gong gecun shizi caimuzhi xingming bei* 重修天聖宮各村施資材木植姓名碑].[43] Among the people who contributed money and material were, in addition to those who came from the vicinity of the palace, many residents from other towns in Fushan County. This shows that Tiansheng Palace continued to be Fushan County's most important religious center and that it enjoyed a broad base of support in the area.

It is worth paying attention to the fact that the "twenty-eight communes" that would be so active in subsequent generations did not, apparently, play any role in the palace renovations during the second year of the Ming emperor Longqing's reign. While it remains unclear exactly when these twenty-eight communes were founded,[44] the communes and the fiefs' participation in the palace's affairs evidently increased during the Qing dynasty. During the reign of Yongzheng 雍正 [r. 1723-1735], the fiefs' populations joined to collect a large sum for the Tiansheng Palace's repairs. The communes independently had a memorial built for the occasion, with the last section of its epigraph declaring: "During the tenth year of the imperial reign of the great Qing dynasty's Yongzheng, on the first day of the sixth lunar month in a *renzi* 壬子 year, the twenty-eight communes joined in efforts to erect a stele."[45] Even now, this is perhaps the earliest known mention of the "twenty-eight communes" in stone engravings. Regarding the palace's minor and major affairs, the Daoist priests in charge always discussed and engaged in transactions with commune leaders. For instance, during the sixth year under the Tongzhi emperor 同治 [r. 1862-1874], the stele pavilion of the Tang emperor Xuanzong's "Inscriptions Recording the Sages" collapsed because of heavy rainfall. The priests in charge immediately notified the leaders of the twenty-eight communes that repairs were needed.[46] This type of social organization was the bond link-

43 See Zhang Jinke , *The Complete Collection*, 94-97.

44 In the pamphlets that scholars from Fushan County have published in recent years, the "twenty-eight communes" are always traced back to the Tang dynasty period, but that dating remains entirely unfounded.

45 "Chongxiu Tiansheng gong bei 重修天聖宮碑 [Stele Commemorating the Renovation of Tiansheng Palace]," in *The Complete Collection*, 165-166.

46 "Chongxiu yu beilou jie 重修御碑樓碣 [Stone Tablet Commemorating the Renovation of the Stele Pavilion Commissioned by the Emperor]," in *The Complete Collection of the*

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ing the Tiansheng Palace to nearby communities. A similar phenomenon has been observed in the ancient societies of Dunhuang 敦煌.[47] Yet this type of organization around communes and fiefs did not exist during the time of the Tang dynasty's Abbey Celebrating the Tang, because in those days, more importance was placed on cultivating a relationship with the imperial court.

6 Concluding Remarks

Originally a relatively unknown mountain, Mount Yangjiao became, in the particular context of the advent of a new dynasty, the scene of Daoist myth making. As the Li Tang clan bestowed Lord Lao with the titles of Sage Ancestor and Sovereign Emperor of Mysterious Origin, Mount Yangjiao began to build a special relationship that linked it directly to the Tang dynasty's political legitimacy. The five apparitions of Lord Lao on this site at the dawn of the dynasty eventually became an event of historical significance, which both the court and its common subjects committed to memory. The epigraphs following Xuanzong's reign also continually referred to it, to the point that the flora found on the monastery's site, through a succession of withering and flourishing cypresses and grape and kudzu vines, eventually became the barometer of the Tang empire's prosperity and decline. Such is the background against which the Abbey Celebrating the Tang gained the special attention of the imperial court and against which Xuanzong commissioned the "Inscriptions Recording the Sages," sending messengers from the imperial court and important Daoist figures from the capitals to the monastery in order for them to hold the Golden Register's Purgation ceremony and to pray for the empire's good fortune. Most importantly, because it held enshrined representations of six emperors, from Gaozu to Xuanzong, the monastery assumed the dual function of being concurrently a Daoist temple and an imperial ancestral shrine.

Following the fall of the Tang dynasty, the monastery entirely lost the connection that linked it to the former rulers' political legitimacy, forcing it to reinvent itself. On the one hand, members of the monastery kept on forging auspicious omens, in an attempt to rebuild a relationship with the new dynasties. The monastery's change of name from Tang Blessings to Tiansheng can indeed be seen as the result of all these efforts. On the other hand, the monastery also kept reinforcing its bonds with nearby communities. The Abbey

Three Jin States' Stone Inscriptions, 289.

47 See Hao Chunwen 郝春文, *Zhong gu shiqi sheyi yanjiu* 中古時期社邑研究 [*Studies on Communes and Fiefs in Ancient China*] (Taipei: Xinwen feng chuban gongsi, 2006).

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Celebrating the Tang's fate reflects the capacity of political dynamics to mold religious practices in ancient China. Yet it also provides us with a successful example of how a Daoist temple that had lost the protection it once enjoyed from the empire's most powerful figures was ultimately able to restore its vitality by integrating itself into the social life of the surrounding area.

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Medieval Daoist Concepts of the Middle Kingdom

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Abstract

The ancient Chinese people believed that they existed at the center of the world. With the arrival of Buddhism in China came a new cosmic worldview rooted in Indian culture that destabilized the Han [*huaxia* 華夏] people's long-held notions of China as the Middle Kingdom [*Zhongguo* 中國] and had a profound influence on medieval Daoism. Under the influence of Buddhist cosmology, Daoists reformed their idea of Middle Kingdom, for a time relinquishing its signification of China as the center of the world. Daoists had to acknowledge the existence of multiple kingdoms outside China and non-Han peoples [*manyi* 蠻夷] who resided on the outskirts of the so-called Middle Kingdom as potential followers of Daoism. However, during the Tang dynasty, this capacious attitude ceased to be maintained or passed on. Instead, Tang Daoists returned to a notion of Middle Kingdom that reinstated the traditional divide between Han and non-Han peoples.

Keywords

cosmology – Daoism – Middle Kingdom – *Zhongguo*

1 Introduction

As is the case with many older civilizations and peoples, the ancient Chinese considered themselves the center of the world and thus named themselves *Zhongguo* 中國, the Middle Kingdom. To be the center of the world signifies not only the geographic location of a country but also the territorial reach of its political, economic, and cultural influence. From this stems the Chinese

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people's predetermined sense of superiority over the bordering ethnic groups and their cultures. Generally, one thinks of the *Zhongguo* of ancient times as a civilization, rather than a place with distinct geographic boundaries. If anything, it vaguely referred to the land under the *de facto* control of the ruling dynasties of the central plains and, thus, shifted along with the territory of each dynasty. What lay outside *Zhongguo* was thought to be the untamed borderlands of culturally inferior people.

With the arrival of Buddhism in China came a new cosmic worldview rooted in Indian culture. Buddhist scriptures generally consider the Magadha kingdom at the Ganges River basin the center of the world, which clashed with Chinese notions of itself as the Middle Kingdom. For those familiar with mainstream Chinese culture and traditions, the impact of this clash may not seem apparent. People generally consider the Chinese view of itself as the center of the world to have remained intact until Matteo Ricci's late sixteenth-century mission to China and, further, that it was not until the Opium War in the 1840s that China was forced to abandon its sense of cultural superiority as a heavenly mandated empire. In other aspects, however, the impact of this clash was clearly felt. This is certainly the case for devout Chinese Buddhists across Chinese history. This is also the case with medieval Daoism. The common view of Daoism as a strongly homegrown Chinese religion is supported by such Daoist texts as the "Treatise on the Chinese and the Non-Chinese" [*Yixia lun* 夷夏論] and the "Conversion of Barbarians" [*Huahu shuo* 化胡說], which both emphasize Chinese cultural and ethnic superiority over bordering populations and reflect an attitude of intolerance toward non-Han worldviews. However, the reality is more complicated.

Related research on the topic tends to begin with a survey of Daoist discussions of "barbarians" and "heretics." For instance, Kristofer Schipper, in his study of medieval Daoist texts, traces changing Daoist notions of "barbarians." As he points out, Daoism was first aligned with Buddhism in opposing certain traditional Chinese religious practices, such as sacrificial rites involving the taking of life. Thus, at the time, Daoist attitudes toward non-Han cultures were friendly. By the Tang dynasty [618-907], however, the relationship between Buddhism and Daoism had shifted to the point that the surrounding non-Han tribes became a target of Daoist hostility.[1] Yamada Takashi has also explored Daoist ideas of "barbarians" and "heretics," noting the Daoist belief that those born in the Middle Kingdom accrued good karma from past lives and, thus, have exclusive access to Daoist teachings and the ability to achieve

1 Kristofer Schipper, "Purity and Strangers: Shifting Boundaries in Medieval Taoism," *T'oung Pao* 80 (1994).

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Daoist self-cultivation. In contrast, those born in foreign kingdoms carry the retribution of sins committed in past lives and are no more than pitiable vermin who may "have human form, but no human emotions." Such "heretics" all live in faraway and desolate lands.[2] Such Daoist ideas are clearly premised on traditional notions of Chinese cultural and geographic superiority.

This article explores the following questions: What Daoist concepts of the Middle Kingdom existed during medieval China? Are they consistent with the Middle Kingdom as conceived in traditional Chinese culture? Did it undergo a change during the medieval era? Finally, what is the value of interrogating the transformation of "Middle Kingdom" as a medieval Chinese concept?

2 The Concept of "Middle Kingdom" in Early Six Dynasties Daoist Texts

At the start of the Eastern Jin dynasty [317-420], Ge Hong 葛洪 [283-343] lists in the "Jindan" 金丹 chapter of the *Inner Chapters of the Baopuzi* [*Baopuzi neipian* 抱樸子內篇] the names of many well-known Chinese mountains, including Mount Hua 華山, Mount Huo 霍山, Mount Heng 恆山, Mount Song 嵩山, Mount Taibai 太白山, Mount Zhongnan 終南山, Mount Wangwu 王屋山, Mount Qian 潛山, Mount Emei 娥眉山, Mount Luofu 羅浮山, Mount Tiantai 天臺山, and Mount Kuocang 括蒼山. As these were all sacred mountains where deities reside, Daoists visiting these mountains to gather medicine and pursue Daoist self-cultivation could receive the help of the mountain gods. Ge was writing after the Yongjia Uprising [311], when the northern central plains were under the control of the Five Northern Tribes. Thus, he writes: "At present, it is no longer possible to reach the sacred mountain ranges at the heart of China. There are still mountain ranges where it is possible to retreat in the Jiangnan 江南 region."[3] The sacred mountains that Ge lists cover present-day Shaanxi 陝西, Shanxi 山西, Henan 河南, Anhui 安徽, Sichuan 四川, and Zhejiang 浙江 Provinces, with the major range being the sacred mountains of Kuaiji 會稽 in the Jiangdong 江東 region. Therefore, it is apparent that, whereas Ge considers Jiangdong—a region formerly ruled by the Eastern Jin—part of the Middle

2 Yamada Takashi 山田俊, "Rikuchō kara Tō no dōkyō bunken ni mirareru iteki to gedō 六朝から唐の道教文獻に見られる夷狄と外道 [Barbarians and Heretics as Seen from Daoist Texts from the Six Dynasties to the Tang]," in *Sankyō kōshō ronsō* 三教交涉論叢 [Interactions Between the Three Teachings], ed. Mugitani Kunio 麥谷邦夫 (Kyoto: Kyoto daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūjo, 2005).

3 Wang Ming 王明, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱樸子內篇校釋 [*Collation and Explication on the* Inner Chapters of the Baopuzi] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 85.

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Kingdom, after the Jin ruling house relocated to the south, a division formed between Jiangdong, located at the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, and the Middle Kingdom concentrated in north China.

A similar concept of Middle Kingdom is seen in chapter 14, "Investigating the Spiritual Pivot" [*Ji shen shu* 稽神樞], of the *Declarations of the Perfected* [*Zhen'gao* 真誥], which reads: "Ping Zhongjie 平仲節 was a man of Hezhong 河中. When the 'Great Barbarian 大胡' brought chaos to the central plains, Ping crossed the Yangtze River and arrived at Mount Kuocang."[4] Here, "Great Barbarian" refers to Liu Yuan 劉淵 [250-310] and the "chaos" he brought to the central plains refers to the Yongjia Uprising. The first section in chapter 15, "Revealing the Profoundly Faint" [*Chan you wei* 闡幽微], in the *Zhen'gao* describes how Sun Ce 孫策 [175-200], "after inheriting his father's position led his followers to seize control of the Jiangdong region and then hoped to unite the central plains (*zhongguo*)."[5] Here, Jiangdong and *Zhongguo* are treated as separate entities. In the same section, the text continues:

> Mount Luofeng 羅酆 is in the position of *gui* 癸. The *gui* location here probably does not refer to one of the twelve heavenly stems, but, instead, to the direction one faces with the central plains at the center. In this case, this corresponds to somewhere north of Youzhou 幽州 and Liaodong 遼東, in the northern seas who knows how many tens of thousands of *li* 里 from the shore.[6]

Here, again, one can see how the Middle Kingdom still refers to the northern central plains. The *Zhen'gao* was compiled by Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 [456-536] in the Liang dynasty [502-557] from the Highest Purity [*Shangqing* 上清] Revelations of Yang Xi 楊羲 [330-c. 386] and the Xu 許 family, who lived during the first half of the Eastern Jin dynasty. Tao is responsible for the commentary that appears in the text. The way in which the text uses *zhongguo* seems to reflect how the transmitters of Highest Purity traditions understood the geographical reality of the Middle Kingdom from the Eastern Jin to Liang dynasties.

The first ten chapters of the *Scripture of the Divine Incantations of the Cavernous Abyss* [*Dongyuan shenzhou jing* 洞淵神咒經] were completed during the period from the Jin [265-420] to the Liu Song [420-479]. The first volume in the Dunhuang 敦煌 manuscript version reads:

4 *Daozang* 道藏 [*Daoist Canon*] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988), 6:574c.
5 Ibid., 6:583b.
6 Ibid., 6:579a.

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> During the *jiawu* 甲午 year, the Liu clan returned to the central plains and established their rule in Chang'an. The people of the Qinzhou 秦州 District were overjoyed. The surrounding non-Han tribes were subjugated and went back to live in the wilderness, not to return to their residences in the central plains. Daoism began to prosper.[7]

This passage recounts the historical event in which Liu Yu 劉裕 [363-422; r. 420-422] of the Eastern Jin once overtook Guanzhong 關中 for some time. Chapter 6 in the same text reads: "The Dao says, 'from now until the *jiaxu* 甲戌 and *renwu* 壬午 years, disciples of Buddhism in the Middle Kingdom will gradually weaken and die out. With each day, Daoism will flourish in the Jiangnan and Sichuan areas.'"[8] The emphasis here is that, whereas Buddhist monks in the Middle Kingdom will languish and perish, Daoism will continue to flourish in the Shu-Han territory of the Jiangnan. This passage treats the areas under the rule of the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties [420-589] as geographically separate from the Middle Kingdom. It seems, then, from the perspective of a person living during the period from the Jin to the Liu Song, *zhongguo* refers exclusively to the northern central plains and Guanzhong areas. At the same time, the Jiangdong region, while formerly considered a part of the Middle Kingdom, had succumbed to a momentary period of decline due to foreign invasion. During this period of decline, cultural legitimacy and advances in Daoism were concentrated in Jiangdong instead.

Although a geographical sense of *zhongguo* is contingent on such shifts in geopolitics, its sense as the center of civilization and enlightenment remains unchanged. The *Yixia lun*, by Gu Huan 顧歡 [fl. 420-479] in the Southern Qi dynasty [479-502], establishes a dichotomy between the "Han people of the central plains" [*Zhongxia* 中夏] and "the Rong people in the west" [*Xirong* 西戎]. It considers Daoism the only religious teaching pure and righteous enough to fit the culture of the Han people and their lands whereas Buddhism and its teachings are suited to the lands of the Rong people. Whether in terms of nomenclature or geographic boundaries, *Zhongxia* is indistinguishable from *zhongguo* in the works of Gu Huan as well as Ge Hong and Tao Hongjing because both refer to a place centered on Han civilization.

7 See also *Daozang*, 6:3b, for comparison. Some of the language of the two texts vary. For instance, the *Daozang* version uses *renshi* 人氏 where the Dunhuang manuscript says *Liu shi* 劉氏.

8 See also *Daozang*, 6:20a, for comparison. Some of the language in the two texts vary. For instance, the *Daozang* text does not use the phrase *Zhongguo shamen* 中國沙門 [Chinese monks].

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During the Six Dynasties period [220-589], Daoism tended to abstract and conceptualize *zhongguo* to de-emphasize the significance of its geographical sense in favor of its valence of cultural superiority. This can be seen in chapter 6, "Instructions for Shaping Destiny" [*Zhen ming shou* 甄命授] in the *Zhen'gao*:

> The Lord of the Western Citadel told his wife, "To leave the three evil paths and to also become human is difficult. Should one become human, to also be born as a man, and not a woman, is difficult. Should one be born as a man, to also be one without disability, is difficult. Should one be born without disability, to also be born in the Middle Kingdom is difficult. Should one be born in the Middle Kingdom, to also encounter a worthy emperor and parents is difficult. Should one encounter a worthy emperor and be born into a practicing Daoist family, to also possess a kind, humane, and good heart is difficult. Should one possess a good heart, to then also believe in Daoism and immortality is difficult. Should one believe in Daoism and immortality, to then also encounter "the Great Peace *Kalpa* in *renchen* 壬辰 year" is difficult. How can one not strive?"[9]

According to this passage, only those who live in the Middle Kingdom and are of sound bodily and sensory faculties have the capacity to cultivate the Dao. Further, those residing outside are all "only human in form, not in feeling" and, therefore, cannot directly receive the benefits of Daoist teachings. Whether one is born in the Middle Kingdom became a condition for participating in Daoist practice.

The early Lingbao 靈寶 scriptures in the Jin to Liu Song period also promote this line of thinking. Chapter 46 of the *Secret Essentials of the Most High* [*Wushang biyao* 無上秘要] cites the "Major Precepts of the Upper Chapters on Wisdom and the Ten Virtues" [*Zhihui shishan dongzhu shangpin dajie* 智慧十善勳助上品大戒], in the *Scripture of the Upper Chapters on Wisdom in the Dongxuan Tradition* [*Dongxuan zhihui shangpin jing* 洞玄智慧上品經], thus:

9 *Daozang*, 6:523b–c. For more on this passage, see also the *juan shang* 卷上 of the *Shangqing zhongzhen jiaojie dexing jing* 上清眾真教戒德行經. There is some variation in the wording. A point worth noting is that some have taken this passage as a case of the *Zhen'gao* copying the Buddhist *Sishi'er zhang jing* 四十二章經 [*Sutra in Forty-Two Parts*]. The original Buddhist scripture says, "though the six conditions be met, still it is difficult to be born in the Middle Kingdom 六情已具, 生中國難." Here, "middle kingdom" originally refers to the core district in India for the transmission of Buddhism. However, among Daoists, some borrowed this saying and took *zhongguo* 中國 [Middle Kingdom] to mean *zhongxia* 中夏 [Chinese].

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> Article 5: aid Daoist masters in acquiring ecclesiastical robes and one may, in a different life, reside in the Middle Kingdom and, thus, live a carefree life without being cast to wander in the borderlands of the Man-Yi. One's children will be of honest and handsome comport, wearing the hat of officials and jade ornaments.[10]

Chapter 74 in the same texts cites the *Scripture on Affirmations in the Dongxuan Tradition* [*Dongxuan dingzhi jing* 洞玄定志經], saying: "Should one encounter non-Han people such as the Man or Yi people, you should wish that all living creatures, when reincarnated, be born into the Middle Kingdom and not a border area or beyond."[11]

In these passages from Daoist texts in the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties, *zhongguo* is the center of the world's most advanced civilization, with Daoism as the only doctrine suited to its land and people. In contrast, the four or five non-Han tribes, because of retribution for the sins of past lives, are born in the borderlands and thus unable to access the Dao. Their only chance to cultivate immortality is to be born in the Middle Kingdom in a subsequent life. Thus, in the south at this time, the Middle Kingdom has two meanings: first, there was the material *Zhongguo*, which has relatively a clear and established geographic location; second was the conceptual *zhongguo* defined as culturally superior to borderland ethnicities. According to the Daoist teachings at the time, those who are culturally superior people of the Middle Kingdom do not necessarily have to reside within the geographic boundaries of the Middle Kingdom because those who are culturally Chinese are able to cycle through many lives without limits. Additionally, non-Chinese people can devote themselves to the Dao and, through accumulating good deeds, be reborn as Chinese in a subsequent life. Similarly, a person who is geographically Chinese can, because of the accumulation of sins, be reborn as a non-Chinese person. This ideology reflects the influence of the Buddhist concepts of reincarnation and karmic retribution.

The influence of Buddhist thought on the Daoist sense of the Middle Kingdom goes even deeper. Originally, China had only a uniplanar concept of five directions, which included the four cardinal directions plus a center. With the introduction of the Buddhist ten directions concept, the Chinese added to their five directions a zenith [*shang* 上] and nadir [*xia* 下] to achieve three-dimensional space. As the nadir overlaps with the center, which was

10 *Daozang*, 25:164b.

11 Ibid., 25:226a.

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already one of the original five directions, this created a six-directional space, a compromise between the Chinese uniplanar five-directional space and the Buddhist multiplanar ten-directional space. *The Highest Purity Esoteric Text of the Green Land on Goods Deposited in Foreign Lands* [*Shangqing waiguo fangpin qingtong neiwen* 上清外國放品青童內文], a classic Shangqing text, contains descriptions of six kingdoms located along the six directions of the world. It lists the country of Haratī 啊羅提 to the north, the country of Īşāta 伊沙陀 to the south, the country of Niviralünā 尼維羅綠那 to the west, the country of Suntarā 旬他羅 in the north, the *yuanjing qingdun ziran* 元精青沌自然 country at the zenith, and the *taihe baozhen wuliang* 太和寶真無量 country at the center. This text also describes a Middle Kingdom as follows:

> The Middle Kingdom is located at the southern tip of the Lake of the Great Wind, 520 billion *li* from dry land. It maintains the earth's core, keeping it from falling. The land of the Middle Kingdom is as exquisite as gold. Its music is engraved in the country at the center. The central mountain Mount Kunlun, another name for the many levels of heaven, is at its heart. Beyond Mount Kunlun is the Palace of the Hanging Garden and Seven Treasures, the abode of immortals. Beyond that, one is level with the sky. The periphery of the Middle Kingdom runs 120 billion *li*. Its people are nine feet [*chi* 尺] tall. They all engage in "pulling and guiding" exercises and live to be 1,200 years old. The Middle Kingdom possesses the Inscription of the Six Tones 六音之銘, placed there by the Jade Emperor on High. Its people can sing out its sounds to move the masses of lower society as well as the old, allowing them to understand that the teachings of the Middle Kingdom hold the promise of immortality. Thus, its people practice the doctrines of Higher Purity, holding rituals, internalizing the songs, and, in doing so, live for 1,200 years without fear of sudden or early death.[12]

The Middle Kingdom discussed here is neither the geographic sense of *zhongguo* nor a *zhongguo* that is culturally superior to its surrounding foreign countries; it is a religious-mythical *zhongguo*. The six kingdoms of the six directions have equal standing; the Middle Kingdom is not treated as the center of Daoist

12 *Daozang*, 34:12c-13a. For more on the Daoist appropriation of the Buddhist "ten directions" in the *Shangqing waiguo fangpin qingtong neiwen* 上清外國放品青童內文 [*The Highest Purity Esoteric Text of the Green Lad on Goods Deposited in Foreign Lands*], see Erik Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism: A Survey of Scriptural Evidence," *T'oung Pao* 66 (1980): 110.

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doctrines. The existence of this mythical Middle Kingdom in this text reflects the steady influence of Buddhist cosmology on Daoism. During the first half of the Six Dynasties period, this influence was not yet strong enough to alter the Daoist concept of the Middle Kingdom; by the end of the Northern and Southern Dynasties [420-581], however, it had become strong enough to affect a Daoist reconceptualization of *zhongguo*.

3 Concepts of the Middle Kingdom from the End of the Northern and Southern Dynasties to the Tang Dynasty

In 570, Zhen Luan 甄鸞 [535-566] cited a Daoist manuscript known as *Scripture on Relieving Suffering* [*Jiku jing* 濟苦經] in his *Laughing at the Dao* [*Xiaodao lun* 笑道論] to discuss a new cosmic worldview that was heavily influenced by Buddhist teachings. Zhen Luan drew only from excerpts of the *Jiku jing*. Later, it circulated as a chapter in the *Supreme Scripture of the Marvelous Dharma and Original Forms* [*Taishang miaofa benxiang jing* 太上妙法本相經] as well as the Tang dynasty text, *Dongxuan lingbao Scripture of Original Forms and Cycles of Kalpas* [*Dongxuan lingbao benxiang yundu jieqi jing* 洞玄靈寶本相運度劫期經]. I cite and discuss a passage from the *Jieqi jing*:

> Between the sky and earth is 150 million *li*. Mount Kunlun 昆侖 is the center of the earth. Between heaven and earth there are eighty-one halls, which are also called the eighty-one skies. The four directions that Kunlun faces constitute four worlds. Mount Kunlun is the source of the four great seas, which flow from the foot of Mount Kunlun out in four directions before returning to the abyss. Mount Kunlun, at 15,000 *li* high, is the tallest mountain on earth. Three quintillion *li* south of Mount Kunlun is another Mount Kunlun. North, south, east, west—the four sides of this Mount Kunlun, like the last, are also of an incalculable vastness. Between the two Mount Kunluns, every full thousand is called "one." If you count a thousand of these ones, you get a number called "two." If you then count a thousand of these twos, you get a number called "three." When you have counted a thousand of these threes, you get a number called "small number one [*xiao shu yi* 小數一]." When you have counted a thousand of these "small number ones," you get a number called "one." A thousand of *these* "ones" makes "two"; a thousand of *these* "twos" makes "three"; after repeating this process three times, you get a "middle thousand [*zhongqian* 中千]." After using the same counting process on this "middle thousand" three times, you get a "great thousand [*daqian* 大千]." Thus,

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> you have a great chiliocosm [*sanqian shijie* 三千世界] managed by the immortals in ten directions.[13]

If we replace "Mount Kunlun" here with "Mount Meru 須彌山," this passage would be nearly indistinguishable from Buddhist cosmological discussions of the chiliocosm or "one billion worlds" [*sanqian daqian shijie* 三千大千世界]. Borrowing the concept of a great chiliocosm clashes greatly with the Daoist cosmology and creation stories. For one thing, *zhongguo* no longer designates the "center of the world." Instead, Mount Kunlun is the center of every world while there is no center within or among the "one billion worlds." Such a worldview is present neither in the old Lingbao scriptures of the south nor in the Shangqing texts of the Jin to Liu Song period. This is not because southern Daoists were unaware of Buddhist cosmology when they created Daoist scriptures; rather, they openly rejected it to avoid having it threaten their worldview. However, the *Jiku jing* chapters at the end of the Northern Dynasties [386-581] nearly adapted the language of such Buddhist cosmology word for word. It was then transmitted via the *Benxiang jing* and *Jieqi jing* through to the Tang dynasty.

The *Benxiang jing* was one of the first Daoist scriptures created in the final years of the Northern Dynasties. When Zhen Luan was alive, it had about eight to ten chapters, including "Perfected One of the Eastern Pole Inquires into the Categories of Things" [*Dongji zhenren wen shipin* 東極真人問事品].[14] Chapter 9, which has been passed down to us through its Dunhuang manuscript version, subscribes to the same cosmology as the *Jiku jing* (*Jieqi jing* version). It offers a new parameter for understanding both *zhongguo* and Han territory [*handi* 漢地]. The *Benxiang jing* follows the Jinglao 靜老 Celestial Lord's travels to the four regions in the four directions. When he arrives in a country, he draws on Daoist doctrines to convert the king and officials. The extant chapters show that the countries that he visited include Xi'nayu 西那玉, Gaoyang 高陽, Fuli 浮黎 and Chunhe 純和 to the east, Chiming 赤明 to the south, Datang 大堂 to the west, Wuliangyu 無量玉 to the north, and Qinglingshilao 青靈始老. These kingdoms, which are in various directions and areas, do not reflect the Six Dynasties' notion of a Middle Kingdom surrounded on four sides by "barbarian" land. Rather, it resembles the system of a

13 *Daozang*, 5:852b–c.

14 For more on the *Benxiang jing*, see forthcoming works by the author. The *Benxiang jing* was completed before 570 by a Daoist in the Northern Dynasties. By the early Tang, it had increased to twenty-three volumes and was likely a major work of the period.

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great chiliocosm. In fact, these kingdoms seem to exist on an entirely different plane than China.

A passage in chapter 9 in the *Benxiang jing* reads:

> The Celestial Lord said: You have said that there are countless countries in the ten directions, an incalculable amount. There is a country on the east-facing side of Mount Kunlun called "the great land of Fuli." Within Fuli are 99,999 smaller countries. (Below you list examples, such as the nine countries of Piyi 羆夷, Jiji 雞集, Hucheng 虎成, Niuhao 牛號, Zang'gu 牂羖, Muma 木馬, Kang'gou 康狗, and Shibi 豕庳. Of these, the people of Kang'gou and Shibi "have the same hands and feet as the people of China.") The "nine barbarian countries" [*jiuyi zhi guo* 九夷之國] on the east-facing side of Mount Kunlun refer to these nine. The remaining 99,999 countries are all "Han countries" [*hanguo* 漢國]. The Han people are mostly descendants of heaven; they are not related to the nine barbarian peoples. Only the truly pious followers of the way can be born in the "land of the Han" [*hanzhong* 漢中]. These eastern countries are all worthy of receiving Daoist doctrines. However, the "nine barbarian countries" are not.[15]

Most of the people from these non-Han countries have physical characteristics as well as manners and rituals that are far different from those of Chinese people. They cannot directly receive Daoist doctrines either. Aside from these nine countries, all the others are "Han territory" where celestial beings are reborn as human beings so that they can devote themselves to the Dao. In this passage, the nuances of *zhongguo, handi*, and *hanzhong* are similar.[16] Whether one is able to practice the Dao distinguishes the "Middle Kingdom" and "Han territory" from the "nine barbarian countries." At the same time, as countries within a great chiliocosm, not one of these categories of designation is singular. Thus, from Gu Huan's binary division between *zhongxia* and *xirong* to the *Benxiang jing*'s distinction between *handi* and *jiuyi*, there is a proliferating worldview that transcends set ideas about geopolitical territory and space.

15 Tianjin shi yishu bowuguan 天津市藝術博物館, *Tianjin shi yishu bowuguancang Dunhuang wenxian* 天津市藝術博物館藏敦煌文獻 [*Tianjin Art Museum Collection of Dunhuang Documents*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), 6:158-60.

16 Here, *hanzhong* 漢中 recalls a line from Gu Huan's treatise: "*The Inner Chapters of the* Xuanmiao 玄妙內篇 [*Xuanmiao neipian*]" is a true canonical work of *hanzhong*, not an inelegant text." Wang Ka once shared in a personal communication with me that the meaning of *hanzhong* should be China, but many believe it is synonymous with the territory occupied by Zhang Lu 張魯. I believe that Wang Ka is correct.

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Even so, as a Northern Dynasties text, the *Benxiang jing* holds on to a concept of "barbarians" that is rather different from what one might find in the southern Daoist scriptures of the early Six Dynasties period. Daoist scriptures from the south distinguish between Han and non-Han peoples by adhering to the central territory of the ruling houses of the Han, Wei, and Jin [202 BCE-420] as the demarcation for *zhongguo*. In contrast, the *Benxiang jing* takes Mount Kunlun as the center of the universe to determine the boundaries between the Han and non-Han. Thus, while early Six Dynasties Daoist scriptures espouse the idea that only the Middle Kingdom is suited for Daoist religious conversion, the *Benxiang jing* holds that, within the vastness of universes and worlds, only the "nine barbarian kingdoms" are excluded from Daoist indoctrination. Put in this light, the debates regarding Han and non-Han peoples that occurred tirelessly from the end of the Han to around the Southern Qi dynasty [479-502] (exemplified by the "Huahu shuo" and "Yixia lun") seem rather pointless.

After all, the geographic *zhongguo* refers not only to the central territories of the Han, Wei, and Jin ruling houses as well as the Jiangdong region but also "Han territories" where non-Han people reside. If one considers the northern origin of the *Benxiang jing*, it is easy to see that northern Daoists saw areas to the north and west traditionally considered "barbarian territory" as well as the territories overtaken by the non-Han Northern dynasties rulers as Han territory whose people would naturally be able to receive Daoist teachings, regardless of ethnicity. This understanding adds a new dimension that explains how the Daoists, historically so trenchantly nativist, were able to handle the religious-political relationship with northern non-Han rulers despite the prevalence of ethnically divisive ideologies. It also answers the question of how there are so many non-Han converts to both Buddhism and Daoism apparent in the material evidence from the time. It is likely that maintaining an open-mindedness regarding the division between Han and non-Han peoples is one of the reasons that the northern Daoists could work with non-Han rulers to attract a large non-Han following.

From the Daoist traditions of the latter Southern dynasties to the tablet inscriptions in Tang dynasty Daoist temples, discussions on the number of Daoist scriptures tend to follow the same script. Chapter 2 in the *Pivotal Meaning of Daoism* [*Daojiao yishu* 道教意樞], by Meng Anpai 孟安排, cites the *Text of the Doctrine of Right Unity: Scriptures and Diagrams on Rules and Precepts* [*Zhengyi fawen jingtu kejie pin* 正一法文經圖科戒品], saying:

> From the beginning of creation to the end of the *kalpa*, China has 123,000 scrolls of important Daoist classics under one heaven. The remainder are spread in the four directions among the barbarian tribes,

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> which each have 84,000. The discourse and language across these texts are consistent; they differ only in how finely they lay out their arguments and how they divide their chapters.[17]

The *Origins of the Marvelous Gates* [*Miaomen youqi* 妙門由起] completed in 713 cites the *Supreme Protocols of the Great Perfected* [*Taishang taizhen ke* 太上太真科], saying:

> If one were to select only the most essential texts out of all the Daoist classics under one heaven, the amount would still be innumerable. From the beginning of creation to the end of the *kalpa*, China has 123,000 scrolls, while the barbarian tribes each have 84,000 of the remainder. Any that remain thereafter have not been definitively accounted for.[18]

In Renshou County, Sichuan, the Record of the Nanzhu Temple [*Nanzhu guanji* 南竺觀記] stele inscription from the eighth year of the Tianbao 天寶 reign [742-756] reads:

> The number of all the "precious scriptures of the three caverns" under one heaven total 367,000 scrolls: 244,000 of them are scattered across the borderlands in the four directions, while 123,000 of them are in China. The Shangqing scriptures total 100 scrolls; the Lingbao scriptures, 40 scrolls; the Sanhuang 三皇 scriptures, 14 scrolls; the Taiqing 太清 scriptures, 36 scrolls; the Taiping 太平 scriptures, 170 scrolls; the Taixuan 太玄 scriptures, 270 scrolls; the Zhengyi 正一 scriptures, 200 scrolls; in addition to these, there are 70 scrolls of amulets and charts. Classics such as the *Shengxuan* 升玄, *Benji* 本際, *Shenzhou* 神咒, *Shengji* 聖紀, *Huahu* 化胡, *Zhen'gao* 真誥, *Nanhua* 南華, *Dengzhen* 登真, and *Biyao* 秘要 comprise about 1,000 scrolls. Altogether, they total 2,100 scrolls that currently exist in the world, such as works outside the Daoist canon, including Confucian

17 *Daozang*, 24:815b.

18 Ibid., 6:734a. For recent scholarship on the *Taizhenke*, see Ōfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾, *Dōkyō to sono kyōten* 道教とその經典 [*Daoism and Its Canon*] (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1997), 409-505. According to Ōfuchi, the *Taizhenke* first appeared in book form before 440 and was expanded and revised in the sixth century. The *Taizhenke* originates in the study of scriptures and Daoism in the south during the Jin to Liu Song period. Its use in the Tang-dynasty *Miaomen youqi* likely includes ideas from the end of the Northern and Southern Dynasties period.

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> classics. Additionally, 128,070 scrolls collected within the three caverns of the heavenly realm have not circulated in the world.[19]

A study of the dynastic records of Daoist scriptures from the Eastern Jin to the Tang dynasty reveals that in fact "little more than one thousand scrolls" truly represent Daoist scriptures. Thus, these accounts of the number of Daoist texts are undoubtedly exaggerated.

It is notable, however, that without exception they use the phrase "under one heaven [*yitian zhixia* 一天之下]," rather than "under heaven [*tianxia* 天下]," implying that there is more than one world. The Nanzhu guanji inscription mentions that, of the 367,000 existing scrolls, only 123,000 are in *zhongguo*, while 244,000 belong to the surrounding "barbarians." The attitude expressed here differs greatly from the early Six Dynasties view that the surrounding non-Han peoples "have human form, but not human emotions." This is likely the result of the Daoist reconceptualization of the notion of *zhongguo* under the influence of Buddhist cosmology. In these texts, it seems that Daoists have abandoned the idea of China as the center of the world. Instead, there is an acknowledgment of more than one world and, thus, more than one middle kingdom; moreover, there is a recognition that the surrounding non-Han peoples can also devote themselves to Daoist doctrines. Compared to the early years of the Southern Dynasties, where the Han-barbarian divide was strongly upheld within Daoism, this is certainly a revolutionary change.

All the same, this revolutionary change was not maintained or passed on during the Tang dynasty. Some in the early Tang (i.e., during the reign of Xuanzong [r. 712-756]), a Daoist text appeared called the "Supreme Great Dao Scripture of Jade Purity" [*Taishang dadao yuqing jing* 太上大道玉清經] that held clearly anti-Buddhist attitudes.[20] In discussions of foreign people receiving Daoist doctrines that appear in chapter 2 in this work, the tone of this text reverts to that of the early Six Dynasties.

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19 For more on this well-studied stele, see Liu Yi, "Research into the Catalogue of the *Daozang* of the Early Tang Dynasty: Based on *Nanzhu guan ji* and the Daoist Scriptures of Dunhuang," in *Scriptures, Schools and Forms of Practice in Daoism: A Berlin Symposium,* ed. Poul Andersen and Florian C. Reiter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 191-92.

20 Schipper places the completion of this text at around 750, the height of the Tang dynasty when it was at once progressive and vast, but also inwardly harbored a narrow-minded culture of Han nativism. See Schipper, "Purity and Strangers," 63. In his contributions to *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, John Lagerwey writes that this text was completed during a time of intense debate between Daoists and Buddhists. See Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, ed., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1:525-27.

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> The Celestial Lord said, "the land of those countries is humid and toxic. The people of those [border] countries are the same. How came this to be? Thus, the land is called 'the golden direction' for all manner of creatures are born in such a remote place. The people there know not of the true and right teachings, only the "three vehicles" and *apadana* of Buddhism. They know nothing of the Daoist Secret Precious Canon, the Mysterious Seal Script of the Heavenly Realm, or the Patterns of the Dragon and Phoenix. They are not aware that Daoist doctrines are the doctrines of the immortals ascended to the heavenly realm." Hearing the Celestial Lord speak, the listeners feared that their bodies and fortunes were not up to Daoist standards and, thus, all began to weep piteously, kowtowing until they bled. They once again asked the Celestial Lord, "The people living there spent their days in such a dirty and smelly place. How dare they dream to achieve immortality within their lifetimes and tie their fates to the Dao? They can only hope, in their next lives, to be reborn in the Middle Kingdom where the Dao exists. We only hope, oh great and merciful Celestial Lord, that you grant us the methods to fast, cultivate ourselves, and perform the rituals."[21]

The "Preface to Laozi's Western Ascension and Conversion of Barbarians" [*Laozi xisheng huahu jing xushuo* 老子西升化胡經序說] is a work of similar ilk that is also part of the Dunhuang manuscripts completed during the Xuanzhong period. The opening describes a scene where Laozi converts eighty-one barbarian kings in Khotan.

> You people have vicious hearts, enjoy the taking of life, only consume blood and meat, and bring harm to all living creatures. I hereby preach to you the Yaksha Scripture and command that you stop eating meat, only eat wheat and flour, and stop killing and harming. Those who cannot are no better than dead flesh. The barbarians were ferocious, devoid of regard for even their own kin. They feel only greed and lust, no gratitude or loyalty. Their hair is curly and difficult to maintain and clean. Their bodies reek of animal scents and filth. If they were to practice cultivation in this state, it would only vex others. Therefore, let them cut off their hair and beards, leaving only their clothing of their customary furs and sackcloth. Let them hold to the commandments and slowly regain hearts of kindness. On the fifteenth of each month, they should repent.

21 *Daozang*, 33:291b.

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Here, the border populations once again become people who are ignorant of Chinese customs and in need of a great Daoist master to dictate them. At the very moment when the Tang was at the height of its power and its people at their most confident and most progressive was also when an old sense of cultural superiority was revived.[22] Daoist understandings of the "Middle Kingdom" likewise reverted from being part of a cosmic worldview to being one based on a racial-ethnic binary. At first, this reversion might have been a case of the magnificence of the flourishing Tang naturally feeding a sense of pride, confidence, and self-indulgence. Once it met with the chaos of the An Lushan Rebellion, however, the recoil from the previous period of openness resulted in a growing tendency toward isolation.[23]

4 Conclusion

The preceding discussion draws on a modest body of texts to offer a sketch of how medieval Daoist ideas of *zhongguo* transformed over the period from the Six Dynasties to the Tang dynasty. Beginning with the notion of *zhongguo* based on the traditional divide between Han Chinese and non-Han "barbarians," it then follows how—under the influence of Buddhist cosmology—*zhongguo* is reimagined to accommodate a more capacious worldview that transcends the ethnic divide, only to return inadvertently to the older traditional worldview. Though inadvertent, this return became the normative Chinese attitude toward outside cultures from the Tang dynasty onward.

It is also worth remarking that the rise of a new Daoist concept of *zhongguo* based on the ideas of the universe as represented by texts such as the *Jiku jing*, the *Benxiang jing*, and the *Jieqi jing* are all the result of northern Daoists'

22 Zhang Weiran 張偉然 believes that the people of the Tang maintained the ethnic division between Han and non-Han peoples and looked down on non-Han peoples with a sense of cultural superiority. Yet, when it came to politics, they were able to regard them as equals. See Zhang Weiran, "Tangren xinmuzhong de wenhua quyu ji dili yixiang 唐人心目中的文化區域及地理意象 [Cultural Areas and Geographical Images in the Eyes of Tang People]," in *Tangdai diyu jiegou yu yunzuo kongjian* 唐代地域結構與運作空間 [*Tang Dynasty Geographic Structure and Their Use of Space*], ed. Li Xiaocong 李孝聰 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2003).

23 As Zhang Guangda 張廣達 has pointed out, the Tang, while the most culturally advanced Chinese feudal society, also harbored conservative tendencies. See Zhang Guangda, "Tangdai de zhongwai wenhua huiju he wanqing de zhongxi wenhua chongtu 唐代的中外文化匯聚和晚清的中西文化沖突 [International Cultural Exchange in the Tang Dynasty and East-West Cultural Conflict in the Late Qing Dynasty]," *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中國社會科學 3 (1986): 41.

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receptiveness to Buddhist theories. The fact that the *Benxiang jing* increased to twenty-three volumes during the early Tang might speak to the resonance and influence of its ideas. That Daoists finally abandoned this new concept of *zhongguo* to embrace a traditional worldview is a matter of how the northern-oriented Daoist traditions interacted with the environment of the early Tang. This is a topic worth exploring separately.

Ge Zhaoguang once pointed out that the new understandings of geography that Zhang Qian 張騫 brought to China from his western expeditions did not fundamentally change ancient Chinese people's deeply held worldviews; for them, China was still at the center of the world.[24] At the same time, medieval Buddhists were not the only ones who found the eye-opening discussions of China and the universe in Buddhist scriptures compelling. This revolutionary worldview, which decentered China, the Middle Kingdom, affected medieval Daoism and its followers. When the far-reaching influence of medieval Buddhism and Daoism on Chinese society is considered, rather than concluding that the effect of foreign cosmology on Chinese people is historically insignificant, we should recognize that the unprecedented moment of Chinese receptiveness during the medieval period may shed new light on the relative conservatism and inward-looking attitude that took hold in the dynasties that followed. It is a different perspective on the historical shifts that took place from the period leading up to medieval China until after the Song dynasty.

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The Symbolic Construction of Reality: The *Xici* and Ernst Cassirer's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms

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Abstract

This paper, unlike scholars who ascribe to it a copy theory of meaning, argues that the logic of the *Xici* is best described through "philosophy's linguistic turn," specifically Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms. Cassirer's concept of the symbol as a pluralistic, constitutive, and functional yet concrete and observable *form*, is comparable to the symbolic system in the *Xici* 系辭: *xiang* 象, *gua* 卦, *yao* 爻, and *yi* 易. Their similarity is due to a shared philosophical orientation: humanism. The characteristics of the *Xici*—the part-whole (structuralist) relationship typical of correlative cosmology, the simultaneously sensuous and conceptual nature of its symbols, the stress on order as opposed to unity, and the importance of symbols per se—for Cassirer are characteristics that were only possible in European intellectual history after a substance ontology was replaced by a functional one. For Cassirer, a functional ontology is closely associated with a humanism that celebrates creations (i.e., language) of the human mind in determining reality. This humanism is coherent with the intellectual context—Confucian humanism—contemporary with the period of the *Xici*'s composition. It would thus be inconsistent to concede this humanism to the *Xici* without also conceding that its understanding of the symbols is akin to that of the linguistic turn. Finally, even regardless of this comparative framework, the *Xici* runs into a paradox if we read it through a copy theory of meaning, paradoxes that immediately dissolve if we read it through the paradigm of the linguistic turn.

Keywords

Ernst Cassirer – humanism – linguistic turn – philosophy of language – philosophy of symbolic forms – symbol – *Xici* – *Yijing*

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1 Introduction

Through a comparative look at Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms (henceforth, PSF) and the genealogy of the PSF, we will see, first, that the Cassirean subject/the sage in the *Xici* 系辭 is a functional subject that orders phenomena into coherence through symbols of its own creation. The phenomena, the subject, and the symbol are brought into a mutually dependent relationship. Second, the symbols (hexagrams) are not copies of a preexisting world; like the understanding of language under the linguistic turn, they are informed by the existing world but essentially determined by human beings. Third, these symbols allow the world to take on meaning, value, order—that is, specifically *human* experience. The symbol as the enabling condition of human experience is thus the enabling condition of human freedom. Fourth, the symbols function through a part/whole structuralism: in the *Xici*, the hexagram and the *yao* 爻 lines have meaning only in relation to the whole.

For Mark Edward Lewis, Willard Peterson, and Michael Puett, the *Xici* describes a process in which sages passively duplicated existing cosmic laws into the hexagrams. This is a copy theory of meaning, and I believe that reading the *Xici* under this paradigm is mistaken. My claim has three levels. First, the text runs into a paradox if we read it under a copy theory of meaning—paradoxes that are resolved if read through the logic[1] of a linguistic turn. Second, if the *Xici* is viewed in comparison with Cassirer's PSF and the philosophical genealogy of the PSF, it is implausible for it to have the philosophical characteristics usually attributed to it (functionality, part-whole structuralism, *xiang* 象 as both sensuous and conceptual, pluralism and becoming), without its symbolic system (*xiang*, *gua* 卦, *yao*, and *yi* 易—henceforth, "symbolic system") operating under the logic of a linguistic turn and the sage having a constitutive role in the creation of the symbols. Third, Cassirer is one of the European tradition's greatest humanists;[2] he has a rare ability to take culture seriously as a philosophical topic and is arguably singular in the systematic attention

1 I do not use the word "logic" in the sense of any formal system of logic. I use the word in its more generic sense, as principles or the rationale that underlies a way of thinking.

2 By which I mean a secular humanism in which humans are recognized as the creators of their own values. The best way I can think of to describe Cassirer's humanism (other than saying that humanism permeates all his works, even in his most technical contributions to epistemology and mathematical theory) is to quote this satire of his famous 1929 encounter with Heidegger at Davos. A young Emmanuel Levinas, who was present at the occasion, parodied him as intoning: "Humboldt, culture, Humboldt, culture" (*Les imprévues de l'histoire* [Saint-Clément-la-Rivière: Fata Morgana, 1994], 210). Humboldt refers to Wilhelm von Humboldt, a philosopher, statesman, and pioneer of the modern university. Culture refers to the ideal, shared by educated nineteenth-century Germans that self-realization is the goal of life

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he gave to culture. Cassirer could take culture seriously for the same reason that the linguistic turn took place. The enabling condition of both phenomena is overcoming substance ontology (associated with Aristotelian scholasticism) through a functional ontology (associated with the rise of humanism). Given the humanism of Confucianism at the time of the *Xici*'s composition and the correlative (i.e., functional) system, it does not make sense for the *Xici* to celebrate the hexagrams, identified with the beginning of human culture, through a theory of language characteristic of a substance ontology, which stressed the passivity of man in an already determined order. Let us first look at how the *Xici* does not make sense unless we presume that the symbols created by the sages were constitutive of reality.

2 The *Xici*

This section shows that, at least in the passages cited, the sages needed the hexagrams before they could understand reality; the appended phrases [*ci* 辭], *Changes* [*yi*], and *shu* 數 affect reality; and human beings are needed for completion of the universe.

Xici 1.10 reads, "It is by means of the *Changes* that the sages plumb [*ji* 極] the utmost profundity and dig [*yan* 研] into the very incipience [*ji* 幾] of things."[3] In saying that the *Changes* were necessary for understanding the world, the *Xici* is saying that hermeneutic signs are constitutive of original meaning. If the sages merely passively copied the phenomenal laws that they witnessed, then they would not need the *Changes* before they could investigate or understand phenomena. Similarly, *Xici* 2.2 says that Fuxi 伏羲 "made the eight trigrams in order to become thoroughly conversant [*tong* 通] with the virtues inherent in the numinous and the bright and to classify the myriad things in terms of their true, innate natures [*qing* 情]."[4] In *Xici* 1.7, Confucius says, "The *Changes*, how perfect it is! It was by means of the *Changes* that the sages exalted their virtues and broadened their undertakings."[5] Again, if the sages already had access to the laws of reality, why would they need the *Changes* before they could broaden their understanding? I think the best way to understand what is happening in these four passages is to liken the sage's

and that we realize ourselves by embracing the world, as opposed to sinking into introspection, as in German pietism.

3 Richard J. Lynn, *The Classic of the Changes: A New Translation of the* I Ching *as Annotated by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 63.

4 Ibid., 77.

5 Ibid., 56.

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creation of the hexagrams to technological creations like that of a telescope. The sages needed to have a grasp of the laws of physics to invent such an instrument, but the production of a telescope also required a human mind to synthesize these laws and put them to creative use. After this telescope was invented, the sages could return to the laws of phenomena embodied in this invention, but they were now better placed to observe those original phenomena.[6] At the end of this section, I will offer my interpretation of how we should understand the triadic relationship in the *Xici* between the sage, his inventions (hexagrams), and the phenomenal world.

A statement about the symbolic system effecting change in the world is in *Xici* 1.4: “The *Changes* is a paradigm of Heaven and Earth, and so it shows how one can fill in and pull together the Dao of Heaven and Earth.”[7] Similarly, *Xici* 1.12 says that “the stimulation of everything under Heaven to movement depends upon the phrases.”[8] Likewise, in its treatment of numbers, the *Xici* often posits that numbers cause change in the world. Because in Chinese, numbers have their own characters, “Fu Xi’s invention of writing already includes numbers.”[9] Numbers, like the *Changes* and the phrases, are symbolic inventions of the sages that effect change in the world. Under a framework of metaphysical dualism, the idea that signs affect reality is a logical fallacy: the copy cannot affect the original. The *Xici* thus does not operate under a metaphysical dualism, nor does this passage operate under a “mythic consciousness” that believes the sign has literal power to affect reality. What is happening in these two passages is more sophisticated than a mythic consciousness talking about magical signs; what is happening instead is the logic of the linguistic turn. The phrases stimulate everything under Heaven to move, because the symbolic language that the sages created outlines the boundaries of meaningful experience. The phrases cannot literally change the world; they can only change our

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6 Only in the twentieth century did Western philosophy begin to think philosophically about technology. The ancient view that art and technology were imitative no longer held sway at a time when technologies were invented that had no prototype in nature, i.e., unmovable wings. For Cassirer, no product of human beings can be irretrievably alienated from its creator. All creations of the human spirit, managed in the correct way, allow greater freedom of the human spirit. For the same reason, I believe that only Confucians (who wrote the *Xici*)—contra the Mohists, who saw merely a utilitarian value in technology, and the Daoists, who saw in technology only a teleological utilitarianism injurious to organic spontaneity and fullness—could see the spiritual value of technology.

7 Lynn, *The Classic of the Changes*, 51.

8 極天下之賾者存乎卦，鼓天下之動者存乎辭. Lin Zhiman 林之滿, *Zhouyi quanjie* 周易全解 [*Explanation of the* Book of Changes] (Harbin: Heilongjiang kexue jishu chubanshe, 2012), 132.

9 Levinas, *Les imprévues de l’histoire*, 201.

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representations of the world, which, for someone who accepts that meaning, is essentially dependent upon language/symbolic system, and this is the totality of our (meaningful) world.[10] The *Changes* fills in and pulls together the Dao of Heaven and Earth, because it makes them more meaningful for the human subject than it would be otherwise. Edward Shaughnessy has argued that in making an argument (see below) that forms a part of *Xici* 1.12,[11] "the author of … the *Xici* was participating in a debate about the nature of language and writing that, based on the evidence currently available, seems to have emerged within a decade or so of 300 BCE and then became quite ubiquitous by the middle of the following century."[12] Shaughnessy goes on to call this movement, in which the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and the *Mencius* 孟子 participated, "the linguistic turn of the third century BCE".[13] The portion of *Xici* 1.12 to which Shaughnessy specifically refers is the following:

> The Master said: "Writing does not fully express speech, and speech does not fully express thought."
>
> "This being so, then how can the thoughts of the sages be seen?"
>
> The Master said, "The sages established images in order to express fully their ideas, and set up hexagrams in order to express fully the characteristics [of things], appended statements to them in order to express fully their words, [alternated and penetrated] caused them to change in order to fully express their benefit, and drummed them and danced them in order to express fully their spirit."[14]

10 We have sensations, of course, but pure sensations are not meaningful (in the sense of an enduring, more than passing, significance). For Cassirer, we are *animal symbolicum.* The animal lives in a world of immediate sensations and biological needs, whereas humans can achieve a certain degree of freedom/distance from a physical stimulus-response loop, through our ability to organize/give meaning to experience through symbols of our own creation.

11 In his description of the linguistic turn, Shaughnessy refers to the same passage that I cited (the dialogue between the Daoist and Confucius) ("The Writing of the Xici Zhuan and the Making of the *Yijing*," in *Measuring Historical Heat: Event, Performance and Impact in China and the West*, November 4, 2001, http://www.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/conf/symposium2.pdf). I think his claim about the linguistic turn encompasses the *Xici* 1.12 passage that I cited on the previous page, however (which occurs before the dialogue between the Daoist and Confucius), because its content is repeated in the passage that Shaughnessy cited. Both passages have the suggestion that the sages' symbolic system affects reality (although the idea is more ambiguous in the passage cited by Shaughnessy).

12 Ibid., 208.

13 Ibid., 211.

14 Ibid., 208. I use Shaughnessy's translation, as Lynn took the hexagrams as expressing the sages' meaning—which is disputable. I have amended the Shaughnessy translation at one

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The kind of skepticism about language in this passage is echoed in many passages in the *Zhuangzi*. In *Zhuangzi* 14.7, for example, Laozi ridicules Confucius's pride in his familiarity with the six classics by declaring them nothing but footprints [*ji* 跡] of former kings. According to the *Zhuangzi*, footprints are ossified residuals of an original dynamism; in this instance, shoes [*lü* 履] and the act of stepping that went with it. For the *Zhuangzi*, human freedom does not lie in the human creation of order/form. For the Daoists, order is an existing aspect of the natural world, and the human ability to partake of order lies in our receptivity and sensitivity to the natural order.[15]

For Mark Edward Lewis[16] and Peterson,[17] the way in which the Master (Confucius) avoids the charge of linguistic skepticism and thereby rescues the legitimacy of culture is to say that the *xiang*, hexagrams, and appended phrases capture everything that the sages intended to communicate. The reason that this symbolic system captures reality is that it is more sophisticated than "mere verbiage."[18] The hexagrams are "directly rooted in the patterns of the cosmos and hence not translatable into ordinary speech."[19] The sages passively replicated these cosmic patterns (*xiang*), which are "independent of any human observer; they are 'out there,' whether or not we look."[20] Similarly, for Michael Puett, the sage's creation of the hexagrams is described "in purely passive terms: they did nothing but imitate and pattern themselves on what the natural processes had generated."[21] This interpretation has two problems.

point. The original read: "This being so, then how can the thoughts of the sages not be seen?"—perhaps "not" is a typographical error.

15 Chen Guying 陳鼓應, "Waipian tianyun 外篇·天運," in *Zhuangzi jinzhu jinyi* 莊子今注今譯 [*Modern Commentary and Translation on* Zhuangzi] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985), 389.

16 For Mark Edward Lewis, "Here a system of visual signs and natural referents formed by the images, hexagrams, and appended phrases figured as an alternative to conventional speech. This fullness of meaning offered by the *Yi* is possible because it is directly rooted in the patterns of the cosmos, and hence is not translatable into ordinary language. It remains the province of the sages and those who imitate them" (*Writing and Authority in Early China* [Albany: SUNY Press, 1999], 254-55).

17 For Willard J. Peterson, "The 'commentary' anticipates the objection that words surely are an inadequate means of conveying the sages' understanding of the complexities of change" by arguing that "The *Change* is a text with words, but it includes much that is not susceptible of verbalization; it cannot be dismissed as mere verbiage" ("Making Connections: 'Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations' of the *Book of Change*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42, no. 1 [1982]: 98-99).

18 Ibid., 99.

19 Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*, 254-55.

20 Peterson, "Making Connections," 80.

21 Michael Puett refers to sections 1.11 and 2.2 in particular and adds: "By claiming that the sage, in creating the trigrams, has simply replicated the patterns he has observed in

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First, as we have seen, it is by no means conclusive that the sages passively replicated independently existing phenomena. Second, if the *Xici*, as Lewis and Shaughnessy write, was part of a challenge to "proto-Daoist texts" arguing for the legitimacy of "writing and the scholastic"[22]—culture [*wen* 文], in short—then this copy theory of meaning would be a weak response to the Daoists. I do not think that Lewis[23] and Peterson's[24] explanations of this passage—that Confucians were arguing that *this* symbolic system captures reality more than language does—would convince a hardcore skeptic. Why would the Daoists concede that this system of symbolic representation captures reality when they have already laughed off the possibility of another representational system's (language) ability to do so? If the world is posited as a prior reality upon which human culture is merely a secondary appendix, culture will of necessity be despised as that which stands between us and a prior reality—as in Plato's banishing of the poets (the copy makers) from his Republic. What we find in the *Xici*, however, is an ebullient, almost hyperbolic celebration of culture and the tools that enabled culture. The only possibility remaining to convince the Daoist that symbols capture reality is to ground it in a transcendent authority. Either the sage in the *Xici* was a human messenger receiving divine revelation, à la Parmenides and Mohammed, or the messenger is himself divine, à la Empedocles and Jesus. Grounding the symbolic system in a transcendent authority has the advantage of explaining how the symbolic system affects reality, as we saw above in *Xici* 1.4, 1.12, and 1.10. If a symbolic system is grounded in the divine, then the symbolic system, as in "mythic consciousness," *can* literally claim magical powers. But this resort to transcendental authority is against the humanist spirit of the *Xici* (as well as Confucianism). The *Xici* is replete with the idea that human beings and human values affect the world or bring to completion the work of the world. For example, *Xici* 1.5 says, "That which allows the Dao to continue to operate is human goodness [*shan* 善], and that which allows it to bring things to completion is human nature [*xing* 性]."[25] *Xici* 1.4 says, "his [the sage's] Dao brings help to all under Heaven."[26] *Xici* 2.10 reads, "The *Changes* is something which is broad and great, complete in every way. There is the Dao of Heaven in it, the Dao of Man in it, and the Dao of Earth

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the natural world, the author denies the connotations of artifice" (*The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001], 87).

22 Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*, 241.

23 Ibid., 254-55.

24 Peterson, "Making Connections," 98-99.

25 Lynn, *The Classic of the Changes*, 53.

26 Ibid., 52.

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in it."[27] Furthermore, the *Xici* has a concept for that which the *Changes* do not understand—*shen* 神—which Richard John Lynn has translated it as "the numinous." *Xici* 1.5 reads, "What the *yin* and the *yang* do not allow us to plumb we call 'the numinous.'"[28] The *Xici* evidently does not claim to know anything about the workings of the ultimate au-delà.[29] *Shen* thus functions like Kant's use of noumena: it is meant to draw a boundary beyond which human experience can no longer meaningfully discuss.

The best riposte to the Daoist skeptic in *Xici* 1.12, and the only way to reconcile these seeming paradoxes, is to say that symbolic systems such as language are adequate for capturing reality, or what amounts to the same thing, the reality of one's meaning, because they are the "transcendental conditions"[30] of that meaning. They are transcendental conditions in the sense that they are necessary for constituting our experience of reality. What I reject in Lewis and Peterson and Puett's interpretations is that the *Xici* operated in metaphysical realism. Their interpretation and its implications go something like this: There is an independently existing reality. The sages were beings who had access to this reality and reproduced this reality in symbols that human beings could understand. The reason that we must be respectful, as opposed to hermeneutically suspicious about these symbols, is that the sages who created them were either divine or had access to the divine, but we are not divine and so do not have this access. The symbols are thus magical and affect empirical reality. Because the symbols are our guide for accessing an eternal, unchanging, independently existing reality, and because the sages no longer exist, the symbols are sacrosanct and cannot be changed. I believe that none of these five interpretations is appropriate in describing the *Xici.*

However, my interpretation of the *Xici* does not replace this paradigm with metaphysical idealism. I think the authors of the *Xici* recognized that "the

27 Ibid., 92.

28 Ibid., 54.

29 *Gu hanyu changyongzi zidian* 古漢語常用字字典 [*Ancient Chinese Dictionary*], 4th ed. (Beijing: Shangwu yingshu guan, 2011), agrees with my argument here. It has four definitions for *shen*. One of which is "that which is especially elevated and mysterious," and cites *Xici* 1.5 (as above) as an example; (2) natural laws, as in *Xunzi* 17.3: "That which is accomplished without [anyone's] doing it and which is obtained without [anyone's] seeking it is called the work of *shen*"; (3) spiritedness [*jingshen* 精神]; (4) spirit/soul [*shenling* 神靈]. The *Gu hanyu changyongzi zidian* thus takes *Shen* in *Xici* 1.5 not to refer to natural laws, but that which lies beyond natural laws: the ultimate au-delà.

30 In the sense that they are the a priori forms necessary for thought. In Kant, these *a priori* or transcendental conditions are merely cognitive. Cassirer's "transcendental conditions" are phenomenal and historical, they are the cultural forms necessary for thought and experience, such as language.

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individual mind cannot create reality"—that "Man is surrounded by a reality that he did not make, that he has to accept as ultimate fact. But it is for him to interpret reality, to make it coherent, understandable, intelligible." Through symbolic forms, "man proves to be not only the passive recipient of an external world; he is active and creative. But what he creates is not a new substantial thing; it is a representation, an objective[31] description of the empirical world."[32] This new freedom won for the human spirit, through our ability to be fully human because we created the means/terms for our freedom, is what the *Xici* celebrates. But our freedom is not to the detriment of the natural world. Nature is not, as in the magical rituals of a mythic consciousness, "merely repressed by desiring and imagining. Rather, its own independent being is acknowledged." The sage's ability to give order to nature, thereby enabling human freedom, is "only achieved through obedience to it."[33] The best way I can show how this relationship works is through *Xici* 1.4, where *yi* can be understood as either the "sage," with "his numinous intelligence,"[34] or "the technique of the *Changes*":[35]

> As *Yi* [i.e., the sage/*Changes*] resembles Heaven and Earth, he/it does not go against them. As his/its knowledge is complete in respect to the myriad things and as his/its *Dao* brings help to all under Heaven, he/it commits no transgression. Such a one extends himself/itself in all directions yet does not allow himself/itself to be swept away.... He/it perfectly emulates the transformations of Heaven and Earth and so does not transgress them. He/it follows every twist and turn of the myriad things and so

31 By "objective," Ernst Cassirer is not making a realist claim. We should interpret his idea of "objective" in the sense that uses in talking about "true" here: "We call a proposition 'true,' not because it agrees with a fixed reality beyond all thought and all possibility of thought, but because it is verified in the process of thought and leads to new and fruitful consequences" (*Substance and Function & Einstein's Theory of Relativity* [New York: Dover, 1953], 318). For Cassirer, furthermore, the entirety of experience is the measure of truth. Truth is available as a measure only in terms of the relationship between the part and the whole (*The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, ed. John Michael Krois and Donald Philip Verene, trans. John Michael Krois [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996], 4:117). Cassirer subscribes to what can be called a coherence model of truth.

32 Ernst Cassirer, "Language and Art II," in *Symbol, Myth, and Culture: Essays and Lectures of Ernst Cassirer 1935-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 195.

33 Ernst Cassirer, "Form and Technology," in *Ernst Cassirer on Form and Technology: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Aud Sissel Hoel and Ingvild Folkvord (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 29.

34 Zhu Xi takes this interpretation (Lynn, *The Classic of the Changes*, 70, n11).

35 Willard J. Peterson accepts this interpretation ("Making Connections," 102-104).

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> deals with them without omission…. Thus the numinous is not restricted to place, and *Yi* [i.e., sage/*Changes*] is without substance.[36]

As Richard John Lynn writes, this passage may be *deliberately* amalgamating the sage, whose power is commensurate with that of Heaven and Earth, with the "technique of the *Changes*" and the power of Heaven and Earth per se.[37] I think this amalgamation belies a significant philosophical assumption: the sage (as a functional subject) is identified with the functional, hermeneutic law of the *Changes.*[38] Cassirer's concept of the symbol (and of the subject) is like a sage providing a correlative point in organizing disparate phenomena. Cassirer's concept of the symbol is based on his understanding of symbolic logic. For Cassirer, the rule of relation F that binds the elements of the series F (*a, b, c* …) together is present in each item in the series, but it is not itself a new item in the series, and so cannot be abstracted as an item or "substantial thing." The function is "a representation, an objective description" (see above):

> We must recognize first of all that the order in a certain "bunch" [*Schar*] of elements never adheres to the individual elements themselves nor is given with them as a fixed, finished characteristic, but rather that it is first defined through the generating relation [*erzeugende Relation*] out of which the individual members proceed.[39]

The function and the series are inextricable: each derives its respective meaning and, therefore, existence by its dependence on the other; but they should not be conflated with each other, for they belong "to different dimensions."[40] The sage/*Changes* and these existing elements, as in Cassirer's concept of function, are integrally dependent upon each other for their existence, to the point that, as in a mathematical function, they exist simultaneously or not at all. The functional relation in the mathematical series, when applied to every field of

36 Lynn, *The Classic of the Changes*, 52-53.

37 Ibid., 70, n11.

38 The evidence for identifying the *yi* in this passage with the sage is this: "Looking up, we use it [*yi*] to observe the configurations of Heaven, and, looking down, we use it to examine the patterns of Earth" [*yangyi guanyu tianwen fuyi chayu dili* 仰以觀於天文，俯以察於地理] is structurally very similar to *Xici* 2.2, in which Baoxi "looked upward and observed the images in heaven and looked downward and observed the models that the earth provided" [*yang ze guanxiang yu tian, fu ze guanfa yu di* 仰則觀象於天，俯則觀法於地].

39 Ernst Cassirer, "Kant und die moderne Mathematik," in *Gesammelte Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe*, ed. Birgit Recki (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2001), 9:45.

40 Cassirer, *Substance and Function & Einstein's Theory of Relativity*, 26.

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knowledge acquisition, becomes the cultural-historical subject, represented by its hermeneutic tool—the symbolic form: the symbol form is the name that Cassirer gave to any historically evolving function that orders the phenomenal manifold: "For each of these contexts, language as well as scientific cognition, art as well as myth, possesses its own constitutive principle which sets its stamp, as it were, on all the particular forms within it."[41] Cassirer's concept of the functional, generative hermeneutic law (the symbol) is ultimately his interpretation of the Kantian claim in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that "thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind."[42] Cassirer only ever speaks of the human subject in terms of symbolizing capacities: he equates the subject with our hermeneutic (symbolic) forms. Cassirer thus abnegates an individual-mentalist understanding of the subject: the self, like the sage in the *Xici*, is functional. The sage exists ("perfectly") inasmuch as he can "emulate the transformations of Heaven and Earth"—that is, respect the innate tendencies of things, but he does not completely disappear or get "swept away" because he is that which allowed for the possibility that meaning could be exhaustively obtained. He can bring to fruition the work of Heaven because he provides a correlative point that organizes an existing but otherwise disparate bunch of elements. No matter how much potential, innate tendency these existing elements possess, without an external, generating relation provided by the human subject/the hermeneutic law of the human subject, these elements could not have gained meaningful coherence: they would have slumbered in dormancy.

3 Leibniz, Goethe, and Cassirer's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms

In this second part of the paper, through a comparative look at Cassirer's interpretation of European intellectual history, I show that it would be implausible for *The Book of Changes* [*Yijing* 易經] and the *Xici* to have the philosophical characteristics usually attributed to them (functionality, part-whole structuralism, *xiang* as both sensuous and conceptual, pluralism and becoming), unless its symbolic system is placed under the logic of a linguistic turn and the sage has a constitutive role in the creation of the symbols. The *Yijing*, as its name suggests, is based on a processual metaphysics that assumes the constancy of

41 Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1955), 1:97.

42 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996), 107.

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change and becoming. Furthermore, its hexagrams operate through a structuralism in which the meaning of each one is manifested by contrasting its own configuration (of *yao* lines) with all other possible configurations. As such, meaning is derived through relationality (or a part-whole structuralism), as opposed to "copying" the properties of substances. For Cassirer, these characteristics are simultaneous with a "linguistic view" of language, as opposed to a naïve realist, copy theory of meaning (that of Lewis, Peterson, and Puett).

For Cassirer, as for the Confucians, the possibility of freedom lies with people: order can only be the product of the human spirit. Appeals to order at the level of nature (Daoists) or a transcendent authority (Mohists) surrender our only means of humanity. Similarly, Cassirer would argue against the *Lebensphilosophie* in vogue at his time—that idea of "nature" as an absolute prior condition to all mediation or a pure "life" prior to its distortion in culture, is a (dualistic) chimera. Like the concept of substance, it is a metaphysical assertion. Cassirer's own PSF is, in part, an attempt to resolve the persistent dualisms in the history of Western philosophy: realism/idealism, particular/universal, being/becoming, freedom/necessity. His concept of a symbolic form is, simply put, an extension of the principles of the linguistic turn to all aspects of cultural forms. Meaning, values, experience, and the objects of our experience are essentially dependent on an interpenetrating matrix of "symbolic forms," which are created by human beings. "Truth" is not "independent of any human observer" nor is it "'out there,' whether or not we look," as Peterson attributes to the *Xici*. For Cassirer, truth is available only as a measure in terms of the relationship between a part of representation and the entirety of representation made available by the symbolic forms.[43] Crucially, Cassirer's PSF is not a kind of idealism; the world exists independently, but it is up to the human being to understand it. As in the sage's invention of the hexagrams in the *Xici*, Cassirer's PSF can be described as neither metaphysical realism nor metaphysical idealism: it overcomes this dualism.

One of the most effective ways to understand Cassirer's concept of symbolic forms, especially in relation to the *Xici*, is through its intellectual genealogy, notably that of Goethe and Leibniz. For Cassirer, as a historical thinker, new realms of philosophical possibility were opened up by Leibniz's *Monadology*, and he traces a historical line of descent from Leibniz to Goethe. Cassirer was a "Goethean"; and "the ultimate goal of Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms is to give philosophical form to the feeling of liberation which Goethe's

43 These symbolic forms include but are not limited to, language, myth, science, art, religion, technology (Cassirer, *The Metaphysics of Symbolic*, 117).

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works inspired in him."[44] This feeling of liberation is Goethe's discovery in both his poetry and his philosophy of metamorphosis that only in the human giving form to experience and phenomena do we perceive the whole (or Dao). The symbolic form is a relationship in which the whole imbues the (empirical) particular with meaning, but the whole can be perceived only through the (empirical) particular: the symbol is symbolic of the whole (i.e., it works through a part-whole structuralism). Furthermore, a symbolic form is like the Goethean concept of form in that it is not a *forma substantialis.* Like the Cassirean symbol, the Goethean form can be identified by its process and the concept of form can therefore be interpreted as the becoming of form.[45] Lastly, this symbolic form is not a pre-existing, determined fact of the world; it must be created [*tun*] by forming the powers of the human spirit. We can comprehend the world and ourselves only through our own creations [*Gebilde*].

For Cassirer, this way of thinking about the relationship between the part and whole, neither in terms of the deductive and inductive relationship of a part to a whole nor in terms of a dialectic that cancels each of the particular stages on its way to truth, was sparked by the Copernican-Kepler revolution, found mature articulation in Leibniz's *Monadology*, and was consummated by Goethe. As we shall also see, it is not only Cassirer who saw Leibniz as a revolutionary figure in European intellectual history. Joseph Needham similarly credits Leibniz with the origins of this part-whole paradigm in European philosophy, a relationship that he regards as typical of Chinese "correlative" thinking. As Chang Tung-sun 張東蓀 (1886-1973), one of the first scholars to describe Chinese thought as "correlative," writes, this correlative thinking is best exemplified by the *Yijing.* As we shall see below, for Cassirer, this part-whole structuralism is inextricable from the logic of the linguistic turn in which language *creates* meaning. The same insight should apply to our understanding of the *Xici*: the part-whole structuralism that characterizes it is inextricable from a linguistic turn understanding of language.

44 John Michael Krois, "Die Goethischen Elemente in Cassirers Philosophie," in *Cassirer und Goethe: Neue Aspekte einer philosophischen-literarischen Wahlverwandschaft*, ed. Barbara Naumann and Birgit Recki (Berlin: Akademie, 2002), 172.

45 Massimo Ferrari, "Was wären wir ohne Goethe? Motive der frühen Goethe-Rezeption bei Ernst Cassirer," in *Cassirer und Goethe: Neue Aspekte einer philosophischen literarischen Wahlverwandschaft*, ed. Barbara Naumann and Birgit Recki (Berlin: Akademie, 2002), 180.

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4 Six Outcomes of the Copernican Revolution

The ordering of the world through functional laws as the precondition for the liberation of the human mind and human subjectivity is a recurring point of emphasis in Cassirer's entire *oeuvre*. For Cassirer, the European Renaissance liberated the human subject and the human mind from the "reactionary and restrictive element"[46] of the Aristotelian concept of substance [*ousia*]. In the medieval "harmony of the spheres"—which took its theoretical foundations from Aristotelian and neo-Platonic ontology—a hierarchical, fixed order of being steadily led from the most imperfect to the most perfect (Being), through which all limited and dependent being was fixed in an eternal order. As a result of the Copernican-Kepler revolution, the harmony of the world is no longer a substantial, spatial reality. Instead of partaking in the whole through the fixed order of being, the harmony of the whole can now be obtained through the mind's ability to grasp/form the relational principles of the natural order. For Cassirer, what the Copernican-Kepler revolution achieved against the medieval harmony of the spheres is paralleled by what modern symbolic logic achieved against traditional syllogistic logic and what the linguistic turn achieved against a copy theory of truth. For Cassirer, the linguistic turn is a result of the European tradition's overcoming of Aristotelian substance ontology. In other words, for Cassirer an inseparable relationship exists between naive realism or substance ontology and the copy theory of meaning and, conversely, between a "functional" ontology and the linguistic turn, in which language creates meaning.

The Copernican-Kepler revolution against Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic metaphysics had six mutually conditioning outcomes, which I believe also characterize the philosophy of the *Xici*. Furthermore, all these characteristics revolve around the issue of language.

First, relations are not already existing objects in the world that one copies in a symbolic medium. Relations are only a creation of the human mind.

Second, functionality presupposes and allows for a deeper relationship between the part and the whole—one could say "structuralism"—in the sense that a particular no longer has essential meaning; rather, it gains meaning in connection with laws that only result from the whole.

Third, functionality gives a philosophical place to particularity, becoming, and pluralism. As we see in the philosophy of Parmenides,[47] taking Being or a

46 Cassirer, "Kant und die moderne Mathematik," 42.

47 Cf. Cassirer's discussion of Parmenides' monism in "Mythic, Aesthetic and Theoretical Space": "absolute identity, unity, and uniformity alone constitute the basic logical

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substance ontology as a metaphysical a priori necessarily entails homogeneity (wholeness and indivisibility) as well as timelessness. Being must be whole and indivisible, as divisibility entails change and therefore time. The things of the phenomenal world undergo change, and so are non-Beings, thus illusory, and cannot be thought about. A metaphysics of Being thus logically entails monism and timelessness. The intellectual revolution against a metaphysics of substance results in elevated status for the power of the human mind in constituting reality, for this reality is now a system of relations that is constituted and organized by the human mind and the symbols of its creation. Put another way, after we substitute a functional description of the world with a substantial one, it is more conceivable that a plurality of ways exists to describe the same phenomena. In a functional description, the relations of things are constructions of pure thought, unlike a description under substance ontology, so there is no claim there we are ontologically describing the nature of the thing in itself. In a functional description, an atom, for example, can be understood as both waves and electrons, and these two descriptions can be complementary.

Fourth, a philosophy operating under metaphysical dualisms always faces the problem of how the universal in the form of the concept can be combined with the sense impression of the particular. In the Platonic framework, for example, the *Chora* fulfilled this function. When this paradigm began to lose its grip in the Renaissance, it was no longer necessary to think of the sensuous, particular content as separate from the universal form. One could begin to think of language (as a sensuous particularity) as constructing meaning. Language, as the uniting representation, or the synthetic medium in which the intellectual and the sensuous are brought together, is the clearest example of the reconciliation between the fundamental antagonisms of metaphysics. In Cassirer's view, therefore, Humboldt and the swathe of post-Kantian philosophers who turned to language did so because language achieves the "true synthesis and genuine reconciliation of the great fundamental antagonisms of metaphysics": "the finite with the infinite, the particularity of spiritual being with the universality of spiritual life and spiritual signification."[48]

character of being. Being cannot transform its nature without denying and losing it in this transformation, without falling victim to its opposite—non-being" (Ernst Cassirer, trans. Donald Philip Verene and Lerke Holzwarth Foster, "Mythic, Aesthetic and Theoretical Space," *Man and World* 2, no. 1 [1969]: 7-8).

48 Ernst Cassirer, "The Kantian Element in Wilhelm von Humboldt's Philosophy of Language (1923)," in *The Warburg Years* (*1919-1933*)*: Essays on Language, Art, Myth, and Technology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 115.

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Fifth, functionality or relationality is simultaneous with an elevated status for the human mind/subject: the formative powers of the mind are needed to establish these relations.

Sixth, the establishment of these functional laws requires symbols through which we can represent these functional relations.

I explore these six interconnecting points below in relation to language.

Cassirer's interpretation of the history of language thus follows the same paradigm of a gradual liberation from a substance ontology: the copy theory of meaning is a manifestation of traditional (Aristotelian) logic that was replaced by a functional understanding of language. According to traditional logic, the mind forms concepts by abstracting common properties from a certain number of objects: the concept is that which presents the shared essential properties. The formulation of concepts under traditional logic thus presupposes the existence of definite, fixed properties, which objectively are present: language merely reproduces the essential nature of things. In the view of this substance or "copy theory of knowledge," or "pictorialism,"[49] *truth* is explained in terms of the object; a representation is true if it manages to mirror the properties of the object. In this framework, the mind is literally passive. After the Copernican-Kepler revolution, the removal of the fixed hierarchy of being, and the attendant elevated status afforded to the mind of the subject, the copy theory of meaning runs into problems (as in the first condition above). If relations (as opposed to objective properties) are not always already in the world, which the mind passively mirrors, then we cannot explain how the finished world of concepts and ideas was originally determined before their reproduction in language. For Cassirer, the philosophy of language before Johann Herder (1744-1803) was limited to this copy theory of meaning: merely reproducing the "finished world of concepts and ideas [*Vorstellungen*]" of either externally received cognitive data or internally derived ideas.[50] So Cassirer would agree that if by "linguistic philosophy" and "philosophy's linguistic turn" we mean that "thought is essentially dependent on and bounded by language" and that "meaning consists in the use of words," then the linguistic turn must be traced to a series of German thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: "including Herder, Hamann, Schleiermacher, Friedrich Schlegel, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Hegel."[51] In this new view of language, language does not

49 Ernst Cassirer, *Determinism and Indeterminism in Modern Physics: Historical and Systematic Studies of the Problem of Causality*, trans. Otto Theodor Benfey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), 151.

50 Cassirer, "The Kantian Element," 110.

51 Michael Forster, *After Herder: Philosophy of Language in the German Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2.

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merely mechanically reproduce given determinations; rather, it has autonomy and spontaneity—like the power of the mind in the Copernican-Kepler revolution—which *create* those determinations. Language thus renders inadequate the dualism of the Kantian system, which keeps the objectivity of freedom from the objectivity of being: the creative autonomy of language creates this (dualistic) determination. Nothing is given *a priori* before their manifestation in language.

The linguistic turn was completed for Cassirer by the linguistic structuralism of the twentieth century, whose principles, for Cassirer, are indebted to those of von Humboldt and, in turn, Goethe and Leibniz. As mentioned in the second condition above, one of the outcomes of the Copernican-Kepler revolution is a structuralist relationship between the part and the whole. For Cassirer, this part-whole structuralism can be described as an organic relationship between the part and whole first made possible in European intellectual history by Leibniz. In "Structuralism in Modern Linguistics," Cassirer quotes Viggo Brøndal (1887-1942)—one of the pioneers of linguistic structuralism: "I am in agreement with the universalism demonstrated and practised a hundred years ago by the great master of general linguistics who was Wilhelm von Humboldt."[52] Cassirer goes on to say that the "program of structuralism developed by Brøndal is, indeed, very near to Humboldt's ideas."[53] For Cassirer, it is not an accident either that structuralism is indebted to Humboldt or that it resembles the "morphological idealism" found in Goethe's *Metamorphosis of Plants*.[54] In Cassirer's eyes, Humboldt "transferred Goethe's idea … of organic types" to "linguistic types."[55] For Cassirer, the "holism or organicism" of "morphological idealism" found in Goethe's *Metamorphosis of Plants* "bears a close relationship to linguistic structuralism"[56] in that neither "consist[s] of detached, isolated, segregated facts"—as in a physicalist/mechanical view; rather, they form "a coherent whole in which all parts are interdependent upon each other."[57] In both Goethe's "morphological idealism" and linguistic structuralism, the individual parts are mutually interrelated, and no part can change without changing the whole, leading to a relationship in which the whole is manifested in the part. Thus, for Cassirer, structuralism is "no isolated phenomenon"; rather, it is "the expression of a general tendency of

52 Cassirer, "Structuralism in Modern Linguistics," *Word* 1, no. 2 (1945).
53 Ibid., 117.
54 Ibid., 109.
55 Ibid., 116.
56 Ibid., 109.
57 Ibid., 110.

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thought"[58]—a tendency of thought that was enabled by Leibniz and came to fruition in Goethe.[59]

For Cassirer, Goethe's idea of "morphological idealism" was enabled in a formative way by Leibniz,[60] because, for Cassirer, the *Monadology* eliminated all dualistic separation between the particular and the whole. In the *Monadology*, individuals and the universe are not related quantitatively, as in a mechanical-physical conception—in which individuals are merely next to one another and make up the sum of the parts—but, instead, qualitatively. In this qualitative relation, the whole can be conceived only through the particular, and the particular can be determined and defined only in relation to the whole. What allowed the *Mondalogy* to provide this reconciliation, as opposed to the mechanistic-physical naturalism of Baruch Spinoza, was the organicist worldview that it entailed. Spinoza's pantheism was built on a mechanical naturalism that, like medieval (Aristotelian) metaphysics, related the finite particular to the infinite through an abnegation of the finite particular, that is, the particular partakes of the infinite inasmuch as it disavows its particularity. In Leibniz's *Monadology*, however, one component of the system depends on the others and relates to them by a functional rule. The sum of the parts is not a substantial whole, but the *law* of the whole that (reciprocally) governs all the parts. This integral relationship between the part and the whole is the organic world: "'Life [*Der Lebensprozeß*]' is more than the sum of individual, organic formations [*Bildungen*]; and it is this 'more' which points beyond the mere extension of matter in Cartesian physics."[61] Furthermore, and this is the point made in the third condition above, this part-whole structuralism is inherently more pluralistic—all particulars can be dignified because the (functional) law of the whole is not a preexisting (substantial) *a priori*; it derives from the totality of the particulars and thus changes with any change in the parts. "As the concept of being is correlated with unity, … so there is an analogous correlation between multiplicity and order." When, for Leibniz, "the point of gravity in thought shifts from the

58 Ibid., 120.

59 In the foreword to *Freiheit und Form*, Cassirer writes that in Goethe's worldview [*Weltansicht*] we can see the clearest example of the particular in the universal, in which every course [*Zug*] can be interpreted as simultaneously completely individual and completely typical (*Freiheit und Form* [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961], xiv).

60 Massimo Ferrari, comments: "Cassirer saw a most intimate relationship [*innigste Verwandtschaft*] between Goethe and Leibniz due to the great diversity of Goethe's living forms, its continuity, its inexhaustible interweaving and their inner dynamic could not be possible without the Leibnizian background" ("Was wären wir ohne Goethe?" 181). Cassirer's view of this connection is preceded by the work of Wilhelm Windelband, Rudolf Eucken, Georg Simmel, Karl Vorländer, Dietrich Mahnke, and Bruno Bauch.

61 Cassirer, *Freiheit und Form*, 38.

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pole of being to the pole of order in the total theoretical view of reality" then, of necessity, "a victory of pluralism over abstract monism, of a multiplicity of forms over a single form, is established."[62] Therefore, for Cassirer, when Leibniz replaced the concept of substance with that of relations, an entire swath of metaphysical problems was thereby resolved.[63]

Like Cassirer, Joseph Needham thinks that Leibniz was the first to overcome the metaphysical dualism of the part and the whole in European intellectual history. The "part played by Leibniz in the history of philosophy was that of a bridge-builder. The antagonistic viewpoints of theological idealism on the one hand and of atomic materialism on the other hand had been an antinomy which European thought had never succeeded in solving"[64]—until Leibniz's *Monadology*. Similarly, for Needham, the key to Leibniz's "bridge-building" was the organicist philosophy of a reciprocal part-whole relationship. "The key-word in Chinese thought" for Needham, "is *Order* and above all *Pattern* (and, if I may whisper it for the first time, *Organism*)"[65]—all of which characterize Leibniz's *Monadology.* In contrast to Western-style "subordinative [i.e., Aristotelian] thinking," which relates classes of things through substance and emphasizes mechanical causation, in the kind of organicist Chinese philosophy that Needham calls *correlative thinking*, "conceptions are not subsumed under one another [i.e., Aristotelian, genus-species] but placed side by side in a *pattern.*"[66] "If they did not behave in those particular ways they would lose their relational positions in the whole (which made them what they were), and turn into something other than themselves. They were thus parts in existential dependence upon the whole world-organism."[67] Needham's point about the relationship between the part and the whole in Leibnizian metaphysics, as opposed to the "subordinative thinking" of its predecessors, thus parallels Cassirer's assessment of Leibniz's organicist system and its philosophical characteristics, in contrast to the Aristotelian one that it replaced.

The "organicist" worldview that, in the view of both Cassirer and Needham, Leibniz introduced to European intellectual history had philosophical implications that pushed the European philosophic tradition closer to the characteristics of "Chinese" philosophy: "correlative thinking." A.C. Graham, who provides

62 Cassirer, "Mythic, Aesthetic and Theoretical Space," 8.
63 Cassirer, *Freiheit und Form*, 38.
64 Ibid., 498.
65 Ibid., 281.
66 Ibid., 280.
67 Ibid., 281.

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"the most philosophically sophisticated account of correlative thinking,"[68] has written that "there is a perfect fit between correlative thinking and the … the structuralist approach inspired by Saussure's linguistics."[69] In this picture painted by Graham, Needham, and Cassirer, the shared point of connection between structuralism, correlative thinking, and organicist philosophy is Leibniz. Cassirer believes that structuralism (and the organicist philosophy it presupposes) is ultimately indebted to Leibniz. Needham similarly thinks that Leibniz is the father of organicist philosophy, which is remarkably similar to correlative thinking. Finally, Graham thinks that structuralism is like correlative thinking. We can explain such remarkable "coincidences" if we grant that, following Cassirer and Needham, Leibniz introduced a new kind of ontology to Europe. This new ontology is, as we have seen, comparable to Chinese correlative thinking. All the consequences of this new ontology unsurprisingly are very similar to characteristics of the *Xici*, six of which are listed above. Chang Tung-sun also subscribed to the connection between structuralism/correlative thinking and a non-Aristotelian ontology posited by Cassirer. Chang agrees with Cassirer's analysis that traditional "Western thought is in the last analysis confined to Aristotelian logic" before the revolution of Russell's symbolic logic[70] and that Aristotelian logic is necessitated by a substance ontology that understands the world through a logic of identity, leading to the idea of causality. For Chang, Chinese thought is, instead, characterized by a "correlation logic" in which "one term waits for its opposite in order to complete its meaning"[71] and is best exemplified by the *Yijing*.[72] Consequently, for Chang, the idea of *xiang* in the *Xici* cannot be described through a substance-ontology.[73] The paradigm of language operating in the *Xici* is nondualistic, as in the fourth condition above. What needs to be stressed is that *because* this non-Aristotelian structuralism noticed by Needham, Graham, and Chang is concomitant in the European context with the stress on the necessity of the human mind to make determinations, the same should likewise apply in the Chinese case. In the *Xici*, this

68 David Hall and Roger Ames, *Anticipating China: Thinking through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 295 n22.

69 A.C. Graham, *Yin-Yang and the Nature of Correlative Thinking* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986), 16.

70 Tung-sun Chang, "A Chinese Philosopher's Theory of Knowledge," *A Review of General Semantics* 9, no. 3 (1952): 211.

71 Tung-sun Chang, "A Chinese Philosopher's Theory of Knowledge," trans. Li Anzhe, 1939. http://www.vordenker.de/downloads/chang-tung-sun_thought-language culture.pdf. 22, note 4.

72 Chang, "A Chinese Philosopher's Theory of Knowledge", 215.

73 "It must be noted that behind the *hsiang* 象 no concrete things are implied. Its signification is only concerned with human affairs" (ibid., 216).

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structuralist relationship between and within the hexagrams should be seen as simultaneous with the recognition that meaning is created by humans—the fifth condition mentioned above—as well as the recognition that this meaning requires humanly created signs—the sixth condition mentioned above.

Much of Cassirer's writing features a celebration of the rise of humanism against a repressive religious tutelage. For Cassirer, the rise of postmedieval humanism is enabled by and concomitant with a functionalist worldview, which gives greater power to the human mind; structuralism in which "truth" is no longer in relation to an existing "fact" in the world but in the relation between a part of the representation and the whole of the representation; the assumption that "becoming" and "pluralism" characterizes reality more than "being" and "unity;" a desire to overcome the dualism between the immanent world of the human being, with the transcendental world of concepts, ideals, forms (i.e. language, Kantian schema, and Goethe's "archetypal plant"); an elevated status for human beings, who create meaning, as opposed to just passively copying it; and the symbols of its creation in understanding the world. As we shall see in the following section, the *Xici* is usually understood to be a Confucian text, and the Confucianism at the time of the *Xici*'s composition stressed the very humanism that Cassirer celebrated and saw as the enabling condition of these intellectual revolutions—a humanism that celebrates the human beings in determining reality and their own freedom and thus a concomitant view of language as a human creation that creatively constructs meaning as opposed to merely mirroring it.

5 The Intellectual Context of the *Xici*

Although the authorship of the *Xici* has not yet been (and perhaps cannot be) conclusively established,[74] reading the parts of the text that associate the hexagrams with the beginning of language, technology, and social norms

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74 I am aware of the debate between Chen Guying and Liao Mingchun as to whether the *Xici* is Confucian or Daoist. With regard to this debate, first, I think that these labels may be anachronistic; we don't know whether the writer of the *Xici* necessarily saw his allegiance in such exclusive terms. Second, I do not see how the parts of the text that associate the hexagrams with the beginning of language, technology, and social norms and celebrates this fact could be Daoist, given that Daoists explicitly denounce language and technology, i.e., human creations, as that which stands between them and the Dao. Third, *Xici* 1.12 depicts Confucius arguing with a (presumably Daoist) skeptic and winning. This part of the text in which Confucius successfully defends the objectivity of symbolic meaning is surely contrary to the spirit of Daoism.

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and celebrate this beginning through a lens of Confucian philosophy is justifiable. Confucianism was the only major school in early China that saw refined culture—that is, writing [*wen*], poetry [*shi* 詩], music [*yue* 樂], and ritual norms [*li* 禮]—as key, if not foundational, in its philosophical program. The Daoist, Legalist, Mohist, and Huang-Lao schools saw culture at best as secondary, at worst as pernicious and counterproductive to their utopian vision. The fact that Confucians understood the human being as determinative in its creation of culture/civilization implies that they held the same view of language:[75] human beings supply the potential conditions for meaning. Furthermore, the fact that the contemporary and the immediately subsequent tradition evidently valued the *Xici* for its philosophical justification of culture (especially *Xici* 2.2) also means that it is reasonable to read the text against a backdrop of Confucian philosophy—the school that regarded refined culture in the sense of *wen*—most seriously, philosophically. Mark Edward Lewis has written that the priority gained by the *Yijing* was to gain in the Confucian canon was due in large part to being identified as the origin of written language.[76] Accounts in the Warring States period [476-221 BCE] and early imperial texts on the origins of writing and the trigrams were thus often conflated with each other. For example, Xu Shen's 許慎 postscript to *An Explication of Written Characters* [*Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字][77] and the opening chapter of Liu Xie's 劉勰 *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* [*Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍][78] closely mirror the sage's invention of the hexagrams in *Xici* 2.2. Perhaps because of this identification of writing and the trigrams as the ultimate root of all culture and civilization,[79] and the *Xici* as the "most important account of Fu Xi, the origin of the hexagrams, and the beginning of writing"[80] led to the canonization of the *Yijing*. It does not make much sense to read a text associated with the beginning of language and refined culture through anything other than the school that stressed the necessity of this refined culture for the well-being of humanity: Confucianism.

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75 In arguing that the Confucians saw cultural forms as determined partly by the human agent, I draw on the work of Kurtis Hagen, *The Philosophy of the Xunzi: A Reconstruction* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 2007), in which he argues (and I agree) that the philosophical position of the *Xunzi* is not realist but best characterized as "constructivist."

76 See Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*, 5-6.

77 Xu Shen 許慎, *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 [*An Explication of Written Characters*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1983).

78 Liu Xie 劉勰, *Wenxin diaolong zhushi* 文心雕龍注釋 [*Commentary on* The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons], comm. Zhou Zhenfu 周振甫 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe,1983).

79 Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*, 199.

80 Ibid., 197.

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This stress on the human agent in the creation or maintenance of cosmic order is pervasive in a range of Confucian texts from the late Warring States period to the Han dynasty [202 BCE-220].[81] The *Xunzi* 荀子 says "human nature is bad" [*xinge* 性惡], in a chapter that claims an ordinary person who exerts himself over a long period can "form a triad with Heaven [*tian* 天] and Earth [*di* 地]." In the *Doctrine of the Mean* [*Zhongyong* 中庸], those who possess the most sincerity [*zhicheng* 至誠] can "assist in the transformation and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth," thus forming a triad with them.[82] Even non-Confucian texts, such as the (syncretic) Huang-Lao *Four Classics of the Yellow Emperor* [*Huangdi sijing* 皇帝四經], say that "The activities that form a triad with *tian* and *di* are called cultural patterns [*wen*]"[83] and that "Forming a triad with *tian* and *di* involves uniting with the heart-mind of the common people."[84] It is this idea that people and their activities—their work—makes a creative addition to the world/universe, and this is what I call "humanism" and what, in comparison to the European context, I argue is concomitant with certain views about language.

6 Conclusion

This paper holds that the *Xici* is a humanist text in which the sages interpreted reality to invent the hexagrams based on three arguments.

First, the *Xici* runs into paradox unless we attribute to it a copy theory of meaning in which the mind passively copies a preexisting reality.

81 Richard J. Smith has written that "one important point of affinity between the *Yijing*-related documents of the late Zhou and early Han and many other texts of that era" was a kind of correlative cosmology closely identified in the Han period with Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. 179-ca. 104 BCE) (*Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World: The* Yijing [I Ching, or Classic of Changes] *and Its Evolution in China* [Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008], 32); and "Drawing on earlier metaphysical formulations, Dong and most other intellectuals of the Han period believed that human-beings were not simply passive objects on the cosmic stage; by virtue of their powers of mind—their 'spiritual' agency—they were active participants in the ongoing process of generation and regeneration" (ibid., 36).

82 Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition,* vol. 1: *From the Earliest Times to 1600* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 338.

83 動靜參天地謂之文. Yu Mingguang 於明光, *Huangdi sijing yu huanglao sixiang* 皇帝四經與黃老思想 [*The Four Classics of the Yellow Emperor and Huang-Lao Thought*] (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1989), 257.

84 參於天地，合於民心. Ibid.

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Second, through a comparative framework, this paper has shown that a copy theory of meaning is characteristic of a philosophical system that presupposes a substance ontology. The European philosophical tradition began to think of language as constitutive of reality and started to take it seriously, after it replaced a substance ontology with a relational one. This relational, part—whole paradigm describes Leibniz's *Monadology*, Goethe's concept of form, "linguistic structuralism," Cassirer's symbolic forms, and Chinese "correlative cosmology." The characteristics of the *Yijing* system follows closely the four of the outcomes of the Copernican-Kepler Revolution: (1) a functionalist worldview; (2) signification through a part—whole structuralism 象/卦/爻: each *yao* line only has meaning in the context of the whole hexagram 象/卦, and the entire hexagram has meaning only in relation to the other sixty-four hexagrams; (3) pluralism and becoming, pluralism in the sense that the sixty-four hexagrams can change in sixty-four ways, thereby producing a total of 4,096 situations; the ways in which one can interpret these situations, however, are endless; becoming in the sense that each line/hexagram is always about to change into its next phase; (4) a phenomenal symbol that is simultaneously and unproblematically sensuous and conceptual. The original list is six; this one omits "an elevated status for the human mind/subject" and "These symbols do not function in a copy-theory-of-truth manner." However, Lewis, Peterson, and Puett argue that the sage is passive, that his mind did not contribute to the formation of the hexagrams, and so they merely copied reality. This comparative perspective indicates that simultaneous with a relational worldview is the elevation of the human being/mind as well as the symbols they created to understand world order. It is not possible to have a relational worldview together with a celebration of symbols without a humanism that dignifies the human spirit; they are simultaneous.

Third, we examine the intellectual context at the time of the *Xici*'s composition. The Confucian humanism of the Warring States period and early Han dynasty stressed the human prerogative to produce forms of culture and civilization. This elevated status for the human spirit as well as the forms of its creation is most evident in the foundational role that culture had for the Confucians. Language and poetry were dignified in a way that stands in stark contrast to its diminished status in the Platonic system. The rise of European humanism and its dignifying of language in the linguistic turn is commensurate with the hyperbolic celebration of the creation of symbolic language in the *Xici*. It would be illogical to have such a celebration of language that is not also a celebration of the constitutive role of language in creating meaning and thus a concomitant celebration of the human spirit. At the same time, it

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would be illogical to have an intellectual context that celebrates the human spirit without celebrating the human creativity of language.

Under Lewis, Puett, and Peterson's interpretation, the implications of the idea that the sages passively copied cosmic laws are that the *Xici* operated under a metaphysical realism; humans made no contribution to the creation of the hexagrams; thus, the invention of the hexagrams is ipso facto the result of a mystical revelation; and because the sages merely *passively* copied the arcane mysteries of the universe, the authority of the hexagrams does not lie with the sages but, rather, in preexisting universal laws. Under this logic, the sage is a pantheistic version of Mohammed or Moses: a spokesperson of divine laws. Interpreted in this way, culture finds its ultimate foundation in an extra-human source. This model, as I have shown in this essay, is radically at odds with the text of the *Xici*, the other philosophical characteristics displayed in the *Xici*, as well as the intellectual context in which it was composed.

Kant famously made a distinction between *quid facti* and *quid juris*. I think that Mark Edward Lewis's *Writing and Authority in Early China* and Michael Puett's *The Ambivalence of Creation* operate under the belief that one can investigate the production of culture in early China through mere *quid facti*. As Cassirer is so fond of quoting from Goethe, however, "Everything significantly factual is already theory"[85]—it is impossible to separate questions of fact from questions of value. Facts are neither objective nor neutral. When people labor under a belief that they are merely or objectively dealing in facts—positivism—what often happens is that they unknowingly absorb whatever *quid juris* is currently in vogue. In Lewis and Puett's case, it is a particular view of language that has dominated the Western tradition.

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85 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen, Schriften der Goethe-Gesellschaft*, ed. Max Hercker (Weimar: Verlag der Goethe-Gesellschaft, 1907), 125.

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Book Reviews

Zhu Shoutong. *New Literature in Chinese: China and the World*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2016. 285 pp.

In the past decade, the study of modern Sinitic-language literature has become an exciting academic field. Sinophone studies focus on the power of the sound and script articulations of marginal and supranational communities upon dominant cultures and nation-states.[1]

Zhu Shoutong's *New Literature in Chinese: China and the World* reflects this scholarly trend. The book does not approach the subject from a Sinophone or postcolonial perspective but is more comfortably situated within the traditional discipline of modern Chinese literature as developed in mainland China and Macao. The book's title manifests the author's intent: to replace the common name of the discipline of "modern Chinese literature" with a new name, "new literature in Chinese." This nominal change serves to highlight cultural connections and exchanges between China and the world.

Although the proposed name of the discipline "new literature in Chinese" shows a conceptual emphasis on Chinese language as the defining criterion for modern Chinese literature, the corresponding Chinese term remains unclear to the reader. This is because the term "Chinese" as it relates to language can be translated variously as *zhongwen* 中文, *huayu* 華語, or *hanyu* 漢語, to name just a few possibilities. Further, the meaning of Chinese language has been subject to scholarly debates. "Chinese" is a broad modifier that could refer to what we now call Mandarin Chinese (i.e., Han dialect), Sinitic languages as a whole, classical language, vernacular language, and different scripts and dialects.[2]

1 See Shu-mei Shih, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Jing Tsu, *Sound and Script in Chinese Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asia, 2010).

2 On Chinese language, see W.C. Hannas, *Asia's Orthographic Dilemma* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 3-7.

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The overarching goal of the book is not an exploration of the ways in which the dynamics of Chinese language shaped Chinese literature but, rather, a discussion of the "novelty" of modern Chinese literature. This corresponds to the actions of Chinese intellectuals, who, in the early twentieth century, labeled modern Chinese literature "new literature" [*xin wenxue* 新文學]. It is in this context that the author seeks to expand the conceptual framework of Chinese to incorporate the present-day realities of globalization, immigration, and the movement of people and ideas across geopolitical borders.

Zhu emphasizes "cultural belongingness" among overseas Chinese writers, yet this concept limits the flexibility of the immigrant subjects, as an external cultural force that separates them from the cultural center of the new nation, continent, or culture in which they settle. Zhu's emphasis on cultural belongingness reinforces Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini's argument in *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*:[3] that transnationalism may exacerbate the exploitation of labor in oppressive nation-states.

Zhu also points out that "new literature in Chinese" will "not weaken China's core status in world Chinese culture, rather it will strengthen it" (p. 52). This is because the authors "seek authoritative approval from mainland China, which is where the Chinese cultural belongingness is attached" (p. 56). Elsewhere, the author somewhat contradictorily states that the separation of Chinese literature from the geopolitical constraints of the nation-state "avoids sensitive political complications" (p. 45). One cannot help wondering why authors need to seek "authoritative approval" and whether it is possible to separate Chinese literature entirely from politics. If we consider cultural belongingness a centrifugal or unifying force that reflects a certain authority of Chinese culture, would this not render the outlook of modern and contemporary Chinese literature homogeneous and monotonous?

Chapter 1, "New Literature in Chinese," explores the institutionalization of the discipline of modern and contemporary Chinese literature. Zhu points out the long-term confusion and inadequacy of various names and concepts employed to designate the discipline, which include "modern Chinese literature," "literature in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao," and "overseas Chinese literature." The term "new literature in Chinese" integrates various areas of the discipline into an organic whole because it is "based on the linguistic facts of literary creation," "delimits the boundaries of New Literature," and

3 Aihwa Ong and Donald M. Nonini, ed., *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism* (London: Routledge, 1996).

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"self-evidently" reveals its connections with and differences from Old Literature in the larger field of Chinese literature (p. 8).

Zhu also discusses Western literary theory on the importance of language to support his proposition that Chinese literature should be defined from the perspective of Chinese language. For Zhu, it is unnecessary to discuss the ideological, political, or national factors in literature when conducting literary research. For instance, Zhu understands that Durisin's theory of "inter-literariness" stresses the importance of language and culture. Further extending this view, Zhu argues that "language is part of social existence and it best represents the culture of a nation and the culture itself" (p. 14). This statement is reminiscent of Benedict Anderson's concept of the "imagined communities" based on a common language within the nation.[4] But Zhu addresses the issue from the perspective of literary studies.

In fact, Zhu is sensitive to the cultural and linguistic diversity present in Chinese literature. It is precisely his sharp awareness of the cultural value of diasporic Chinese writers that informs his call for change in the discipline, which, he avers, has been defined strictly "according to political territories" (p. 59). "From a legal perspective, there is nothing wrong with addressing diasporic Chinese writers as overseas writers.... However, from the perspective of cultural ethics, the issue is not that simple" (p. 59). Zhu captures the political complication of the term "overseas writers," which at once marks overseas writers as less significant than the mainland Chinese writers and strategically fixes the identity of overseas writers as *Chinese* writers. Although scholars in Sinophone studies seek to refute the notion of a "diaspora" to resist the discourse of the nation-state,[5] Zhu addresses the urgency of acknowledging the cultural significance of overseas Chinese literature in the larger discipline of modern Chinese literature.

Chapter 2, "China and Its New Literature," discusses the relationship between modern and contemporary Chinese literature and environment, geography, and science. Zhu's advocacy of cultural belongingness is manifested through his identification of "national culture" with China's traditional culture and literature. Zhu argues that the May Fourth writers' ignorance of the literary legacy of traditional Chinese literature inevitably weakened "New Literature's" "literariness." "This means it abandoned its own inherent advantages in the world literature and so eventually lost its qualification to hold a dialogue with

4 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

5 See Shu-mei Shih, "The Concept of the Sinophone," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 126, no. 3 (2011), 709.

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the world literature" (p. 84). One page later, Zhu antithetically claims that the May Fourth writers' literary revolution represents a changing way of thinking about the world. Traditional Chinese literature, according to Zhu, in a way similar to Dante's *Divine Comedy*,[6] has a tendency to envision a "vertical" religious world order that contains heaven and hell. The modern worldview, however, is "horizontal." This "global" paradigm "expands our horizon to every corner of the globe, enabling us to make synchronical comparison and critical examination" (p. 100). Zhu assumes that the fundamental religious differences between China and the West at large in the premodern era prevented comparative studies. This argument requires significant revision in view of Anthony Yu's *Comparative Journeys: Essays on Literature and Religion East and West.*[7]

Further, in his discussion of the fundamental conflict between literature and science, Zhu points out that the advocacy of science, psychological methods in particular, had largely undermined the "emotional and humane beauty" exemplified in the characters portrayed by the May Fourth authors (p. 132). This conclusion clearly echoes Lu Xun's 魯迅 prioritization of a nation's ethos or spirituality over material reality. At the same time, Zhu overemphasizes the discourse of the May Fourth literary canon when talking about the "tragic historical fate of science in the New Literature" (p. 136). Recent scholarship has begun to look at the discourse of Chinese science fiction in the early twentieth century from the perspective of colonialism and Orientalism.[8]

Zhu's analyses consistently points to the unresolved tension between traditional literature and modern culture, but it remains unclear what place his advocacy of cultural belongingness occupies in his critique of modern and contemporary literature. This ambiguous stance is also reflected in the methodology of his analysis. In his discussion of contemporary Chinese short stories written by Tie Ning 鐵凝, Fang Fang 方方, Zhao Mei 趙玫, and others in the last section of Chapter 2, Zhu writes that "flaunting the meaning" excessively tends to turn a story into an allegory. Such rhetoric, if overemphasized, will result in the loss of the "aesthetic pleasure" of the story. The reader requires a more specific, and indeed, scientific analysis of the "aesthetics" of the story. The method of narratology, as discussed in Lydia Liu's *Translingual Practice:*

6 Dante Aligheri, *The Divine Comedy* (Auckland: Signature Press, 2007).

7 Anthony Yu, *Comparative Journeys: Essays on Literature and Religion East and West* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

8 See Nathaniel Isaacson, *Celestial Empire: The Emergence of Chinese Science Fiction* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2017).

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Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity[9] may be one such "scientific" means of analyzing the stories.

Chapter 3, "New Literature and New Media in Chinese," contains Zhu's critique of modern Chinese drama. He proposes that "modern playwrights have little self-awareness, passion or creative ideas on the nature of drama, which leads to a lack of clear classical construction of concept in the development of new drama in Chinese" (p. 153). The author claims that what the May Fourth writers criticized most about traditional opera were "its masking style, fictional plot, and exaggerated characters" (p. 153). Modern drama continued the exaggerated and superficial characteristics of traditional drama, without really fully exploring the nature and capacity of dramatic performance. Zhu cites the example of Cao Yu's 曹禺 viewing his own well-received play *Thunderstorm* 雷雨 as too dramatic and much less profound compared to the plays of Chekhov. Zhu also traces the trajectory of the development of Chinese drama and divides it into three stages: theater-oriented drama, literature-oriented drama, and media-oriented drama. Zhu characterizes "theater-oriented drama" as having "a nature of collective revelry.… Restrained by Chinese culture, the revelry is orderly and under control. It is a form of mental structure in which everyone participates or feels that he has the right to participate; it is not an actual description of an outward behavior, free and boundless" (p. 176). Zhu further comments on the "circular-spectator mentality" (p. 184) of the internet age and mobile-phone culture and the social phenomenon of staging exotic performances of foreign dramas performed in foreign languages. In Zhu's narrative, Chinese drama has no progressive development. Each of the three stages equally demonstrates the author's critique of the immaturity and superficiality of Chinese drama. Zhu's argument that literature-oriented drama is a "new form of drama" remains unconvincing in light of his use of the Ming [1368-1644] romantic play *The Peony Pavilion* [*Mudan ting* 牡丹亭] and the Yuan [1271-1368] *zaju* 雜劇 drama *Romance of the West Chamber* [*Xi xiang ji* 西廂記] to illustrate that traditional drama is theater oriented. The fact that the Chinese dramatic texts, especially the southern *chuanqi* 傳奇 plays, were also perused by a literary audience is amply demonstrated in existing scholarship on readership and late imperial Chinese drama, such as Dorothy Ko's *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth Century China*[10] and

9 Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

10 Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

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Judith Zeitlin's "Shared Dreams: The Story of the Three Wives' Commentary on the *Peony Pavilion.*"[11]

Chapter 4, "China and the World Literature and Culture," offers a case study of Chinese intellectuals' reception of Denmark literary critic Georg Brandes, a case study of the American Humanist Irvine Babbit and his reception in China, and a comparative study of American Humanism and New Confucian Humanism [*xin ruxue renwen zhuyi* 新儒學人文主義]. Zhu's narrative of Brandes's thesis on exile and literature and on the "revolting" spirit of literature fails to take into account Zhu's proposition that literature and culture should be separate from the political. His discussion of the classical Chinese-language journal *Xueheng*'s 學衡 publication of Babbitt's thought suggests that the debate between Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋 and Lu Xun on Babbit might be due in part to a translation problem—Babbit's thought was first introduced and translated into classical Chinese. Zhu's comparative analysis of New Humanism and New Confucian Humanism shows how cultural contact was made possible by the opportunities provided by foreign study among intellectuals such as Liang Shiqiu, Tang Yongtong 湯用彤, Wu Mi 吳宓, and Feng Youlan 馮友蘭. He concludes that "New Confucianism is New Humanism in Chinese cultural circles" "However, the influence of such Humanism is very limited in China but is very great in the cultural world of the Chinese language." (p. 262) This section ably illustrates Zhu's thesis on the influence of transnational cultural exchange on Chinese culture. But the discussion centers on Confucianism, philosophy, and religion, with no discussion of the relationships between religion, thought, and literature.

In terms of its overall structure, the book does not support Zhu's overarching thesis. The book also does not provide a new methodology for a reexamination of Chinese literature from a new perspective. The author's knowledge of traditional Chinese literature and culture is somewhat superficial. Encyclopedic and fragmentary in nature, the book lacks an argument-driven structure. Some sections in Chapter 4 in particular are repetitive. Another significant problem is its non-idiomatic English and the English translation of the Chinese terms. For instance, traditional southern *chuanqi* plays are usually translated as "romances" in English-language scholarship, rather than as "legends" (p. 262). Many footnotes lack page numbers for the works cited.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, *New Literature in Chinese* demonstrates Zhu Shoutong's erudite scholarship in the field of modern Chinese literature. Some of his observations are interesting and suggestive. Zhu's call

11 Judith Zeitlin, "Shared Dreams: The Story of the Three Wives' Commentary on the Peony Pavilion," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54, no. 1 (1994).

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for giving overseas Chinese writers equal footing in the discipline of modern Chinese literature and his stress on the importance of literary studies are both timely and commendable.

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Pema Tsenden. *Enticement: Stories of Tibet*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018. 138 pp.

Pema Tseden is a Tibetan. He is a well-published writer, known and honored in China, where his name is written Wanmacaidan 萬瑪才旦. He has an international reputation as well since his works have been translated into English, French, German, Japanese, and Czech. *Enticement: Stories of Tibet* contains ten of Pema Tseden's short stories, originally published in Tibetan and Chinese between 1997 and 2012. He is also acclaimed for his films, which likewise have been enthusiastically received by audiences in China and in the West. In fact, it has often been his practice to explore a theme and characters in a short story, which then becomes the basis for one of his feature-length films.

He was born in 1969 in Guide Country, Qinghai Province. This province is in western China, and geologically it is the northeast section of the high Tibetan plateau. It is a land of rugged mountains and wide valleys, with little vegetation and harsh weather. The landscape is buffeted by cold winds and, in winter, swirling snow that comes to blanket the land. Tibetan is the language most widely spoken by the people who live there, although Mandarin Chinese is, of course, taught in the schools. As portrayed in Pema Tseden's stories, local officials are Tibetan, but in the cities one can expect to meet Chinese running some of the shops and businesses, and there one finds buses and trucks along with the small motorcycles that are more useful in the countryside of the rugged land.

Being in general isolated from the outside world, the people whom Pema Tsenden encountered as he was growing up were other Tibetans like himself. Most were herders of sheep and yak, as were his parents. The culture that surrounded them was the age-old culture of Tibetan herders, semi-nomads living close to the land and accepting without complaint the challenges handed them by the demanding climate. Overlaying their physical world were the practices of Tibetan Buddhism, a philosophy of seeking calm and preparing for rebirth after death through constant prayer and honor proffered to the communities of monks living nearby. Their world, at once highly defined and isolated from the outside, permeated Pema Tsenden's consciousness. Even after moving to faraway Beijing to study film and directing, he knew that his own culture formed the very core of his worldview. He respected and cherished that culture and so far, in both his writing and film-making, he has been determined to reveal this culture for the larger world to see.

In each of the stories in this collection, the influence of a Buddhist perspective on life and existence can be seen, stronger in some of the pieces than in others but always woven into the tale being told. In the first story, "Orgyan's

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Teeth," two boys are good friends as they go through school in the herder's village, sharing homework and devising adventures together. They are separated later, as one boy, the narrator, moves away from the village for high school, while his boyhood friend remains in the village. At age eighteen, the narrator discovers that his boyhood friend Orgyan had been declared a reincarnated lama. Elders visit him with gifts and beg for his blessings. When the two former classmates meet, Orgyan does not ask for religious formalities to be observed, but the narrator cannot bridge the sense of separation between them. This is not a story of philosophical questions but, instead, is told with a chuckle and a gentle irreverence toward those who put too much weight on the idea of pure holiness.

A gentle Buddhist acceptance of life even in an untrustworthy world colors the second piece, "Tharlo." First published in Chinese in 2012, it became the story in one of Pema Tseden's biggest film successes to date, the film *Tharlo* (in Chinese, *Taluo* 塔洛) released in 2015. It was nominated for the Golden Lion Award at the 72nd Venice International Film Festival in 2014, and in 2015 at the 52nd Golden Horse Film Festival, Pema Tseden won the Best Director award for Best Adapted Screenplay and also for Artistic Exploration, plus being nominated for Best Picture and Best Director at the 23rd Beijing College Student Film Festival in 2016.

In this story, Tharlo is an unassuming and gentle sheepherder, content to spend his days next to the wind-swept hills tending to the herd. The local police officer tells him that he needs to have an identification card, and the card needs to have a recent photo of Tharlo on it. Tharlo cannot imagine why he would need such a card, since everyone with whom he is in contact knows him well. But he agrees to take a bus into the nearest city to get a photograph. The people whom he meets in the city have a lot of ideas for Tharlo. A female barber suggests she and Tharlo should run away together to find a new life. This seems an attractive idea, so Tharlo sells his sheep and brings all his money back to the barbershop. The barber shaves off all his hair so that no one will recognize him in the future when they begin their new life. But after a night together, she takes his money and disappears, leaving the trusting Tharlo wondering exactly what has happened. Back in his village, the local police officer tells Tharlo that his identification photo no longer resembles him with his bald head, so he will need to return to the city for a new ID photo. The Tharlo in this story reminded me of Lu Xun's character Ah Q, except that the Buddhist Tharlo has none of the sarcastic humor or bitter commentary in Lu Xun's stories. Tharlo can return to the herds of sheep and rebuild his prosaic life. All the characters in Prem Tsenden's stories display the quiet matter-of-fact acceptance of life shown by Tharlo.

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Prem Tsenden's quest in his stories and film-making is to display for the outside world the life of the Tibetan people living in China today. He is dismayed by the shallow romanticism he finds when outsiders come to the area to report on the Tibetans living there. Likewise, he objects to the "exoticism" that outsiders bring to their conclusions about the lives of contemporary Tibetans. These themes are reflected in the story "Eight Sheep." One day, as the boy Gaylo is tending to his sheep, a blond, blue-eyed foreigner appears. This young man is an American student from Beijing who has been studying Mandarin but, because of his deep interest in Tibet, he sets off to backpack in the wilderness of the Tibetan foothills and has spent twenty-eight days soaking up the atmosphere of the free and open lands in China's western borderlands.

The problem is that Gaylo does not know one word of English and very little of the Mandarin the foreigner speaks to him. Their communication is through some gestures and Gaylo's sharing the yak jerky his mother had given him. When the foreigner speaks, Gaylo does not understand, but simply looks at the foreigner and sometimes nods his head. The foreigner thinks perhaps Gaylo indeed understands the one-sided conversation of the foreigner. Gaylo does not feel threatened by the foreigner, but clearly is not having a deep exchange with him. When a motorcycle brings some newspapers for the local village chief and the driver gives them to Gaylo for delivery, the foreigner sees that planes have flown into the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001. As the foreigner begins to cry and hugs Gaylo, Gaylo's attention is taken by a young lamb nearby who has just been born and is trying to stand upright. The foreigner decides that he needs to leave China immediately to return home, and as he begins to walk away, Gaylo gives him the plastic bag of yak jerky for his trip home. In return, the foreigner takes off a souvenir badge from the Potala Palace in Lhasa and gives it to Gaylo. When the foreigner is out of sight, Gaylo thinks about what has just taken place but soon hears again the continuous bleating of the lambs. This thoughtful story tells us that the Tibetan boy and the foreigner had communicated with each other, though neither side had learned much about the other. At the end of the brief encounter, each returned to his own society and its values.

Most of the stories in this collection are set in the here and now, a world of daily events that just happen to take place in a part of the world that not many readers will have visited. But in a few of the stories, Prem Tsenden expands his conceptual framework to draw us toward the world as explored by Nobel Prize-winner Mo Yan, whose detailed, realistic descriptions provide an "absurdist" recounting of the real world. In "A New Golden Corpse Tale: Gun," Prem Tsenden takes traditional Tibetan tales of a magical talking corpse and weaves them into his story. In this story, a young man called Decho Zangpo

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undertakes a journey to the remote Dewatsal cemetery in the hope of capturing a talking corpse so that this magical creature can bring him and his family a better life. The only rule is that Decho Zangpo cannot speak to the corpse or reply to the stories that the corpse might tell him. He puts the corpse into a burlap bag, but as they head back to Decho Zangpo's home, the corpse tells a story so interesting and so puzzling that Decho Zangpo asks about it, at which point the talking corpse quickly leaves the tied bag and returns to his place in the cemetery. Decho Zangpo recaptures the corpse repeatedly, but each time the stories only get more interesting, so each time Decho Zangpo asks a question, and the corpse responds by flying away to his home in the cemetery. To hear these fascinating stories, set in the context of folktales that adults and children alike learn in Prem Tsenden's homeland, I invite readers to enjoy this story, along with the others that take up Mo Yan's approach to literary exposition.

This collection of stories contains several delightful and original illustrations, including the cover, by Tibetan artist Karma Dorje Tsering (artistic name Wu Yao) who, like the author, has won many prizes for his work. The editors and translators, Patricia Schiaffini-Vedani and Michael Monhart (along with Carl Robertson, and Françoise Robin), have rendered the stories into an English that is pleasant and satisfying to read. This is a collection that deserves a wide readership.

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The Top Ten Developments in Studies on Chinese Humanities in 2017

Translated by Caterina Weber

Over the past years, research in the humanities has become increasingly rich and varied in China; it is also undergoing significant changes. In order to provide a timely summary of new breakthroughs and issues in the humanities, to promote the advancement and variety of the research in this area, and to enhance the degree of awareness and interest of the public for this field, the *Journal of Literature, History, and Philosophy* (文史哲) and *China Reading Weekly* (中華讀書報) jointly launched an annual "Overview of the Top Ten Developments in Chinese Humanities." This is the fourth consecutive year we have collaborated on this publication.

The following ten issues in the Chinese humanities have been selected for 2017.

1 Following Changes in the Cultural Environment, Scholarly Circles Have Consciously Tried to Create a Characteristically Chinese-Style Academic Discourse

Because of the situation known as "Western learning spreading eastward," Chinese scholarship has long suffered from aphasia. Given the increasingly exposed internal ambiguities that inspire modernity, the subjective consciousness of non-Western countries in particular in the process of modernization has gradually intensified. The course of human history has shown major improvements, and the progress of globalization, symbolized by Westernization, has progressively yielded to the pursuit of indigenization in the area of cultural ideology in many countries and regions.

This process is particularly noticeable in contemporary China. Localization has become a clear trend, as Chinese academia faces historic change from the rise of the great powers. Precisely because of this major shift in the cultural mood, in 2017 an increasing number of newspapers and magazines, as well as more and more academic fields and scholars, began to focus on the Chinese

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model, exploring the establishment of a system of philosophy and social sciences with uniquely Chinese characteristics. Some scholars have declared that the overall target of Chinese humanities and social sciences is that of shaping a Chinese discourse—building a national discourse that matches the imposing background of the rise of the great powers. Various signs indicate that academic circles are fully aware that launching a Chinese-focused academic discourse has become their new task.

2 As Research on the Silk Road Progresses, the Notions of "National Identity" and "World Order" Have Attracted General Interest

In May 2017, the first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation opened and marked a new phase in recreating the Silk Road. This shows that the "turn toward the outside" of a China that had been introverted for several centuries is picking up speed. This historical turn brings with it related advancement in academic research. A renewed interest in the notions of country, ethnic groups, and regions in traditional China, reflections on the meanings of "China," of "Cathay," and subsequently the refining of a new model that exceeds that of a world order based on a nation-state, extracted from thousands of years of a society's achievements, has gradually become a central discussion point among Chinese historians.

Many of the recent scholarly achievements, such as "China from the Perspective of Its Neighbors," a clarification of "Inside and Outside Historical China," "A Perspective of China from Beyond Its People," the "Inner-Asian Personality" that emphasizes ancient dynasties, and so forth, all point to the traditional notions of "national identity" and "world order" that were temporarily put aside under the influence of contemporary factors. At a time when nationalism is spreading and regional conflicts are intensifying, some scholars believe that a better world order can be achieved through a "world system" based on the idea of minimizing mutual harm, instead of a "nation-state model" based on seeking one's own interests.

3 Academics are Calling for the Reestablishment of Chinese Politics and Philosophy and for an Urgent and Comprehensive Reevaluation of Classical Values

Mainstream twentieth-century writing on politics and philosophy most often takes liberal values as a theoretical prerequisite, but in recent years the Chinese

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pattern of social governance has become more prominent; and yet, under the guidance of Western liberal leaders, political practice continuously faces difficult situations, which causes this pattern to be called in question. In fact, a richer political ideology is needed, in which Confucian thought, politics, and philosophy become part of people's perspective and academic circles call for a "reestablishment of Chinese politics and philosophy" "starting from the very sources of Chinese civilization."

Because Confucian teachings and liberalism both have a system based on the disposition of human nature, the theory of human nature has consequently become the starting point for a rethinking of politics and philosophy and a fresh restructuring thereof. Some scholars point out that liberalism considers some specific people rational without making distinctions: this deviates from reality, and the equality it advocates remains at abstract. Confucian theories on human nature distinguish between sages, sovereigns, and ordinary people, and they value the differences between people and emphasize their ability to adjust. Establishing a model of political system strata based on the latter is more applicable to reality. The precise disposition of human nature in the system and arrangements of human society as represented by ancient Chinese Confucian teachings is being given an overall reevaluation.

4 The Usual Paths for the Social Sciences are Narrowing, and "Historical Imperialism" is Gradually Gaining Ground

Over the past few years, the legitimacy of liberalism commonly regarded as ingrained in the social sciences has been heavily challenged. Based on this, some scholars believe that an era of rapid development in the social sciences is coming to an end. Because they were constrained by theoretical paradigms, many scholars turned to studying this area from a historical perspective. For example, researchers in politics began studying the history of political systems or researching the history of political thought; legal research took to studying the history of China's legal system and the history of legal thought on an unprecedented scale; economists began paying close attention to the history of economic thought and to the history of economics, and so on. This shift caused a fresh upsurge of "historical imperialism," seen repeatedly in Chinese social sciences.

The "historical imperialism" that is gradually gaining ground refers to various academic subjects, such as sociology, increasingly often choosing a historical angle as their direction of research or carrying out meticulous research on the history of their own discipline or on the history of learning. To some extent,

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research in the social sciences uses the working methods of historiography but all the currently emerging major "historiographical directions of study" have made methodological choices because of control over research directions. This indicates that at present the social sciences in China are generally in a phase of hesitation and disorientation.

5 The Phenomenon of "False" Ancient Texts Is Becoming Increasingly Worse: Radical Reform Has Become a Matter of Top Priority

Over the past several years, with the increasing digitization of ancient texts and the popularity of databases of classics, we have seen a marked rise in the collection and publishing of classical texts. This is of great significance for the promotion of academic development while carrying on traditional culture. However, following the expansion of this market, some of the institutions in charge of the collection and publication were keen on quick success and immediate benefit and utilized the advantages brought by digitization: they started to blindly produce large quantities of low-quality, duplicated materials, to the point of disregarding academic standards and working in a rough and sloppy way, using other people's achievements without acknowledging sources, and proliferating publications riddled with "false findings" and "false annotations." This ever-worsening phenomenon of "false arranging" of ancient texts has destroyed the academic balance in this area and has made it difficult for many a puzzled reader to determine the quality of a text.

In 2017, scholars thoroughly reformed the way that ancient scriptures are collected, and calls for distinguishing the real from the false became even stronger. Some scholars pleaded for those sorting and publishing ancient books to put more energy and effort into original creation, to produce more annotations that readers "cannot look up" and yet "will find useful." Reinforcing academic self-discipline and publishing management, as well as raising the access threshold and improving evaluation standards, have at present become vital tasks in the publishing of collections of ancient books.

6 The Tendency to Deify Research on the Republican Era Has Been Curbed: Twentieth-Century Academia Has Taken Action to Regain a Wider Following

Since the 1990s, a certain view on matters such as the families of scholars and the foundations of Chinese civilization has become rather influential in

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academic circles, namely that it is very difficult for later generations to be associated with scholars from the Republican era. Promoted and magnified by the media, by the public, and by intellectual circles, this image was enlarged to the point of an excessive beautification or even deification of eminent scholars and academic achievements from the Republican era. Ever since the shift to a new century, this trend has been quite widely criticized, and in 2017 such challenges became particularly fierce and intensive. Many academics point out that scholarly research from the Republican era combines the Chinese and the Western, links the ancient and the modern, and has firmly established the basis of scholarship in contemporary China, but that in its initial stages it inevitably also had its immature, imperfect aspects, and that there is a considerable difference between its standards and the reality today.

Discrepancies in the evaluation of Republican scholarly materials are rooted in the differences between the methods for creating contemporary Chinese scholarship: the key is whether the data, or the use of a specific theoretical tool from a sociological point of view, are seen as the right path for the development of contemporary scholarship. A more relevant question is whether this long-lasting "Republican academic fever" is, in fact, a "Republican culture fever" or simply a "Republican fever"—and whether the excessive favoring of the status of Republican scholarship ultimately reflects a kind of stance toward the history of society itself.

7 Challenging Individualist Values: The Chinese Translation of Roger T. Ames's *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary* Has Been Published

Unrestrained individual freedom is the foundation of, and the primary essence of, contemporary Western political correctness. In recent years, however, an increasing number of scholars worldwide has been attributing the existential crisis humanity is facing in the twenty-first century to the near-extremist tendency to see individualism as a "primary teaching." Therefore, some academics such as the American scholar Roger T. Ames are calling on "Confucian role ethics" as an ideological resource to advance a "second enlightenment" in the present world.

The Chinese translation of Ames's book *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary* was published in 2017. By exploring a fundamental concept emphasized in traditional Confucian teachings, that of "roles in society given to people through specific interpersonal relationships," the book attempts to develop a kind of "moral view of life based on the direct experience of entirety" and thereby challenges Western individualism. Ames's supporters find that this book

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provides a significant ideological resource for solving global struggles with moral principles. His critics worry that putting excessive emphasis on specific roles will cover up Confucian universality and perpetuity. What part *Confucian Role Ethics* will play in reestablishing a world cultural order, and whether it can provide sufficient scholarly support for the "second enlightenment," is a question of time and experience.

8 The Formation of a Genealogy of Knowledge on Women's Writing Is Making Steady Progress: Gender Analysis Has Become the Foundation of Research in This Area

In the 1980s, Chinese women's writing became an important element in the trends of literary thought. Female experiences, appeal, and writing then developed into a major literary phenomenon at the turn of the twenty-first century. These texts had a more exquisite, sensitive way of depicting and pondering the specific physical, sexual identity, and life position of women; they tried to understand and contemplate by making an appearance in the history of human society, to some degree breaking the dominant position of the culture of paternal authority and its absolute freedom of expression, changing the object-like position of women being scrutinized, consumed, even artificialized.

Since the twentieth century, "gender" has been widely used as one of the possible categories for literary analysis. The scope of research on women's literature became wider, and the underlying connections between women's literature and social history developed into an important research area. In 2017, the creation of a genealogy for knowledge on women's literature has advanced steadily, and gender analysis came a step closer to becoming the main method of analysis for literature with a gender-specific undertone. Gender analysis from a female viewpoint caused scholarly, cultural, and social phenomena previously obfuscated by an all-male standpoint to reemerge and be reinterpreted, revealing a considerably different discourse.

9 Silverware Retrieved from a Riverbed Allowed Archaeologists to Prove the Existence of Zhang Xianzhong (張獻忠, 1606-1647), in a Moment of Triumph For Public Archaeology

Between January 5 and April 12, 2017, the excavations at an archaeological underwater dig to retrieve sunken silverware in the Pengshan District of Sichuan celebrated a first major success: over thirty thousand relics from the mid- to

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late Ming era were retrieved, the majority of which were large quantities of silver ingots and silverware obtained by Zhang Xianzhong, a local Ming official. This inland underwater archaeology breakthrough has not only allowed us to confirm the myth of Zhang sinking silverware in the river but also, more importantly, has revealed concrete details on aspects of mid- to late Ming society, political affairs, and military affairs and has been proclaimed one of the most important archaeological finds from the Ming-Qing era since the excavations at the Dingling Ming tomb.

This archaeological find has further stimulated public participation in archaeology and has pushed public archaeology to a new stage. Somewhat distinct from the relatively obscure practices of traditional archaeology, public archaeology is undertaken with the full support of local authorities, enhances the public profile of the site, and functions as an attraction for local cultural and tourism projects. From the very start, these excavations of "silverware in the river" were intentionally open to the public and, in parallel with the excavation work, the organizers held a "Symposium for Historians at the Site of Silverware Sunk in the River at Pengshan" and made preparations for the excavation site to be made into a tourist attraction. Together with the Marquis of Haihun Tomb in Nanchang, whose excavation also continues to make progress, this find marks the swift development in public archaeology in recent years.

10 Artificial Intelligence Technology Advances by Leaps and Bounds: The Wisdom and Moral Principles of Human Civilization Are Facing a Severe Challenge

Because of its use of "reinforcement learning" algorithms and its being unrestricted by human knowledge, the program AlphaGo Zero cuts a splendid figure; because of this, it is said that 2017 could be called the "first year of artificial intelligence [AI]." This indicates that the science and technology behind AI has had remarkable developments, which brings an unprecedented challenge to human wisdom and moral principles: there is a danger that the human species will be forced to give way. There are even those who raise an alarm that "A post-human era is approaching!"

Over several thousand years, the foundations of human civilization and morality, wisdom, freedom, intuition, and benevolence jointly stood for the intrinsic nature of humankind and were enjoyed by humans alone. Now, however, with this cognitive basis already established, the "intelligence" and creativity of human civilization has already started being handed over to machine-based developments. In the future, intelligent machines will increasingly be their

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own masters in carrying out policies and acts involving ethical principles; if their inspection and control of these actions are not implemented effectively, causing them to conform to norms of impartiality and morality, not only will it become impossible for AI to bring about the intended benefits to humankind but the safe existence of humankind and its dominant role in policy-making will also be threatened. How the essence of humankind will be redefined after machines grow into self-controlled "manmade moral beings" that not only have wisdom but also possess ethical qualities has clearly become an extremely urgent contemporary research topic in the humanities.

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